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IF THE FIRST ELECTION among workers at the Budd automobile-body manufacturing plant in Philadelphia to determine their union preferences was an obvious sham, the second one, held on March 20 as this issue goes to press, must take the prize for hollow farce. William H. Davis, National Compliance Director, made a sorry mess of the first election when he barred 800 striking employees—whom the company had promised to take back but never had "found room" for—from voting for their own federal union, an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor. The company union won by a three-to-two vote among 5,800 of the 6,300 Budd workers, but if the strikers had been permitted to vote, and the strike-breakers forbidden to do so—as has been usual at National Labor Board elections—the poll would have favored the independent union. General Johnson outlawed that first election and ordered another. This time he permitted the 800 strikers to vote, but granted the same privilege to the 800 strike-breakers who had taken their places, thus canceling his "liberality." He also laid down the inexplicable rule that while it was not necessary for all Budd workers to vote, the independent union, in order to win the right of representation, must have a majority not of the voters but of the total number of employees in the plant. In other words, an uncast vote was a vote for the company organization. Still more strangely, General Johnson ordered that all ballots be signed with the name and badge number of the voter. In swift retaliation more than 1,000 employees, both actual workers and strikers, decided not to take part in the second election and threatened a new strike. This action weakened their cause, but obviously there was nothing else for them to do, since in either case they were lost. If we are to have a wave of strikes, as has been predicted, if the whole NRA structure breaks down, it should be easy to place a finger on one cause of the trouble.

ELSEWHERE in this issue we print a careful analysis by Herbert Rabinowitz of the bill which Senator Wagner has introduced into Congress as a means of fortifying the position of labor under Section 7-a of the National Industrial Recovery Act. In an earlier article Mr. Rabinowitz pointed out the serious deficiencies in Section 7-a and showed that by its provisions labor actually found itself in a weaker position than it enjoyed before the days of the New Deal. Senator Wagner, fully recognizing this difficulty, has attempted by his proposed amendments to stop the serious gaps in "labor's bill of rights." With this attempt the editors of *The Nation* are entirely in sympathy, and they print Mr. Rabinowitz's criticism only to the end that the new legislation may be strengthened to do what it is intended to do. The right to strike, to organize in labor unions, to bargain collectively, not only must not be denied to labor but must be clearly and actively affirmed. In so far as Senator Wagner's new bill gives equal privileges to company-controlled unions and outside unions, it should be amended. The company-controlled union has never safeguarded and will never safeguard for labor the rights which it has with difficulty established through court decisions and otherwise. And labor organizations should be given additional powers of enforcement through direct appeal to the courts in case the Labor Board, in exercising its discretion in this matter, fails to protect labor's interests. With certain modifications to block such loopholes as Mr. Rabinowitz has discovered, the Wagner bill should be speedily enacted. The mass resistance to its provisions on the part of the Steel Institute and the National Association of Manufacturers, and the reckless defiance of the automobile makers, are sufficient evidence of the need of such legislation.

AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS of comparative quiet in the Illinois coal fields, where the anti-John L. Lewis union of the Progressive Miners of America is more than halfway through its second year of struggle with the United Mine Workers of America, the situation is looking ominous again. The recent surface calm has been due to inactivity on the part of the Progressives, who have been waiting patiently to see whether their claim to recognition would receive favorable attention from the National Labor Board. The immediate prospect is forbidding, because that body, after much delay in facing the issue, has at last refused the request of the Progressives that it sponsor an impartial referendum at which Illinois miners could make their union preferences known. At the time it ruled against such a pool the Na-

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tional Labor Board supported the National Bituminous Coal Labor Board in upholding the Peabody Coal Company's contract with the U. M. W. in Saline County, a stronghold of Progressive Miners with American antecedents. As a last resort, the Progressives have now taken their case before Federal Judge Wham in East St. Louis, seeking an injunction against the carrying out of the contract on the ground that it violates both Section 7-a of the National Industrial Recovery Act and the coal code. If the violence and bloodshed, which have already taken more than a score of lives and damaged thousands of dollars' worth of miners' dwellings, break out again, the responsibility will be the National Labor Board's. There is just as much reason, under Section 7-a, for it to guarantee freedom of union choice in this case as in the case of employer-imposed company unions. Its explanation that it is of the same rank as the Coal Labor Board, and hence cannot review that body's rulings, becomes so many words when it is remembered that two of the National Labor Board's members are John L. Lewis and William Green, presidents, respectively, of the United Mine Workers of America and the American Federation of Labor, both of which have high stakes in the strife-torn Illinois mining towns.

MARCH 25 marks the third anniversary of the arrest of the nine Negro youths accused of rape in the famous Scottsboro case. In the three years which have passed since that March day all nine of the defendants have been tried once and eight of them sentenced to the electric chair, a mistrial having been declared in the case of the ninth boy, Roy Wright. The two youngest boys have by now been turned over to the jurisdiction of the juvenile court. Of the remaining seven, Clarence Norris has been tried and found guilty twice, and Heywood Patterson three times. The defendants are confined in the death house in Birmingham prison, and on March 17 it was reported that four of them had been put in solitary confinement for fighting with a Negro stool pigeon. Heywood Patterson's third trial took place last December, and on the last day of the trial Samuel Leibowitz, the lawyer for the defense, asked for thirty days from the typing of the minutes in which to file a motion for a new trial. Judge Callahan, the presiding judge, refused, but granted thirty days from that day, December 6. Within twenty-eight days Osmund K. Fraenkel, defense attorney, filed the motion, but he was told by Attorney-General Knight that the motion should have been filed during the December term of court. When Judge Callahan was reminded of his thirty-day permission, he declared that if he had given such permission, he had no right to do so under the Alabama law. He accordingly denied the motion for a new trial and the defense was thereupon left only about ten days to file, within the proper time, the bill of exceptions, which involved a reworking of some 3,500 pages of the court record. However, Mr. Fraenkel did file the bill of exceptions on March 5. Judge Callahan has sixty days in which to sign it; after it is signed it goes to the Supreme Court of Alabama.

IT IS EVIDENT that the Alabama Supreme Court will not reverse the decision of the lower court unless it is convinced that the United States Supreme Court would do the same thing. Alabama is thoroughly sick of its *cause célèbre* and would prefer to keep it within State limits if possible. Judge Callahan, moreover, during the trial—with a prospect of an appeal to a higher court constantly before him—attempted at every point to establish disputed points as questions of fact and not of law. Thus he ruled that names of Negro jurors did in fact appear on the jury rolls, not admitting the question raised by the defense of how they got there. It remains for the defense lawyers to find a way of forcing the admission of these disputed facts to the jurisdiction of the higher court. From the conduct of the case so far, the public which is following the fortunes of the Scottsboro boys with sympathetic interest may have confidence that everything that law and able and courageous lawyers can do for the defendants will be done. One may agree or not with the mass-protest tactics of the International Labor Defense, which has defended the Negroes from the end of the first trial; but one cannot fail to give it all credit for devotion to the legal aspects of the case. And by contrary, the courts of Alabama, with the honorable exception of Judge Horton, may feel proud only of the fact that every possible attempt has been made to railroad to the electric chair a group of Negro youths against whom no crime has ever been satisfactorily proved.

THE COPELAND BILL has emerged from the Senate Commerce Committee, and look at the poor thing now! Section 9-c, which prohibited the medicine men from advertising that their nostrums had any effect in the treatment of a list of diseases starting with albuminuria, appendicitis, and arteriosclerosis, and ending with venereal disease and whooping cough, is deleted in toto. Couple this with the earlier deletion of the "inference and ambiguity" advertising clause, of the declaration of formulas on labels, and of the standards clause, and you wonder why the drug lobby is still yelling for more blood, as it is. The latest activity of Lee Bristol's ineffable Joint Committee for Sound and Democratic Consumer Legislation is to put pressure not only on newspaper editors but on columnists and cartoonists to defeat the bill. As a physician sincerely interested in protecting the public health and the public pocket-book, Senator Copeland—who has publicly approved the emasculated bill—must know that his bill is badly damaged. As a politician, he should be informed that if he fails to denounce the emasculation of his bill on the floor of the Senate, he will hear from his constituency on next election day. And he had better not try appealing to them on radio time sponsored by patent-medicine manufacturers!

THE ILLOGICAL CHARACTER of public action is well illustrated by the defeat in the Senate of the proposed treaty with Canada for the joint construction of the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence waterway. In order to relieve unemployment we are seeking high and low for useful public works that can be undertaken by the federal, State, or municipal governments. We do not wish to economize in this field but to increase expenditures. To this end we are beginning various projects which admittedly are based on future rather than present needs and some which probably will never be needed at all. In addition, we are paying millions of dollars to men for merely twiddling their thumbs. Yet the waterway project was opposed largely on the ostensible ground of expense. Of course there were other probably more cogent reasons of which less was publicly said. The power interests, fearful that they would not be able to control the

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proposed electric development of the St. Lawrence River, brought powerful opposition to bear against the treaty. The railroads, mistakenly we think, believed that the waterway would hurt their traffic, while Atlantic seaports from New York to Maine decided, possibly correctly, that the new route would injure them. Inevitably the project will be revived, and sooner or later, if the United States does not join with Canada in building the waterway, the Canadians will undertake it by themselves for their exclusive benefit.

THE nationalist and isolationist aspects of the New Deal have inevitably called forth a host of new proposals to shut our gates entirely to alien workers. Six exclusion bills are now pending before the House Immigration Committee. These measures range all the way from the Dies bill, which would reduce existing quotas under the 1924 law 60 per cent, to the Blanton bill, which would exclude immigration altogether for at least ten years. As usual, the American Legion and other patriotic societies are the chief supporters of the proposed exclusion legislation. And, also as usual, the House committee is clearly disposed to sympathize openly with these super-patriots and to give short shrift to the arguments of those opposed to the exclusion bills. Representative Blanton of Texas revealed precisely the sort of temper and intelligence that stands behind these measures when, during one of the committee hearings, he shouted that if the present alien "scum of the earth, eating under the structural bulwarks of our government, are not stopped, civil war will result." Consistency would seem to require the Roosevelt Administration to support one or another of these measures in order to protect more completely the advantages and safeguards which the recovery program is supposedly creating for American labor. Yet it is to be hoped that the Administration will see, as it has seen in the case of the tariff, that all these attempts to erect still higher national barriers are serving and can only serve to contribute further to our ills by keeping the world divided against itself.

IF PROHIBITION did nothing else, it made the liquor traffic respectable in this country. A decade ago anybody who had suggested that the United States government should conduct a distillery would have been blasted from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon. But in the year 1934 the Administration announces its intention of going into rum-making in the Virgin Islands, and there isn't a murmur. Economically these little patches of land in the Caribbean are in ruin—without industry, without capital, without initiative. Mr. Hoover called them an "effective poorhouse," probably meaning to say that they were in effect a poorhouse. They offer excellent ground for a paternalistic experiment. The Public Works Administration will advance $1,000,000 to revive the once famous sugar and rum industries by buying 6,000 acres of land and building a factory for handling cane. The whole will be a cooperative enterprise, with a distribution of profits to cane growers and factory workers. Two-room houses will be built instead of the present one-room shacks, and will be sold on terms as easy as existing rentals. The sugar-and-rum project is for St. Croix—the largest of the three islands. On the mountain island of St. Thomas—there is no more beautiful spot or more gracious climate in the West Indies—the government plans to build a hotel and develop tourist traffic. The whole scheme sounds as lovely as a wedding march in June, and if it proves to be half as good as it sounds, it will be twice as satisfactory as the present plight of the islands.

SOME two hundred years ago Joseph Addison informed his readers that at Coverley Hall the chaplain was more conspicuous for his mellifluous voice than for his inventive mind, and that, accordingly, he read to his parishioners the best sermons by various other persons instead of composing inferior ones for himself. This was supposed to be absurd, though we have never understood exactly why, but the same scheme—with modern improvements—is being projected by the Congregational church. Phonograph records containing thirty minutes of church service and a sermon by a leading theologian are to be distributed to minor parishes, and thus S. Parkes Cadman will be as ubiquitous as Amos and Andy. We have only two suggestions. The first is that the church should finance the scheme in the fashion invented by the radio and get "sponsors" for all the big names—say, Postum for Billy Sunday and Ex-Lax for Bishop Manning. The other is that no record be made of the speech delivered by William S. Sadler before the International Council of Religious Education held recently in Chicago. Dr. Sadler urged that those persons too dull to be saved by the Gospel should be sterilized.

WE WERE AWARE that liberals were in disrepute, but we had no idea how violent a term of reproach "liberal" had become until we saw the telegram from Lillian Symes (to her publishers) repudiating the blurb on the jacket of her volume "Rebel America," which referred to Mrs. Symes as a "one-time radical and an all-time liberal": "Please make any possible corrections immediately of statement on book jacket that I am ex-radical and present liberal. I am not a liberal and object vigorously to the label." In a letter to a friend, which we have seen, Mrs. Symes objects even more vigorously: "I am not, never have been, and never will be a liberal and can think of no worse insult that could be hurled at anyone's mentality in a time like this." "That I should live to be called a liberal," Mrs. Symes concludes in a tone of outrage that a liberal might envy, "is more than I can bear." Well, well! We sympathize with Mrs. Symes and are glad to proclaim that she is not, never has been, and never will be a liberal. But with the irrepressible optimism of liberals we see a note of hope in the sad story. Mrs. Symes is the first author, so far as we remember, to speak out publicly against a blurb. Is it too much to hope that the whole system of blurbs may be eliminated?

AS our readers know, we frequently draw both information and inspiration from what we can decipher of that esoteric journal *Variety*. The latest thing we have discovered is a bit of exhilarating evidence illustrating the progress of Progress and the spread of a purely international culture. We present five items of news emanating from a single city, and we ask our readers to guess where the news is from: "Clint Boyd and orchestra back at the Casanova. . . . Rose Room, Plaza Hotel, which was open for the holidays is closed again. . . . Woth Sisters closed at the Cathay Hotel. . . . Black and White at Paramount Ball Room, headlining a bill that is clicking. . . . John Farren is installed as the new manager at the Paramount." The answer is, Shanghai.

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Not Back to Hoover, Please!

MR. ROOSEVELT'S attempt to wind up the relief program of the Civil Works Administration at the end of March is the most ill-advised step he has taken since his inauguration. When several weeks ago the President announced his intention to terminate the work of the CWA on May 1, it was not taken seriously. The general feeling was that it was a political statement, intended to curb excesses and lead States and municipalities to assume a larger share of the burden. It was predicted that as May 1 approached, a way would be found to continue federal relief for the unemployed. Instead, Mr. Roosevelt advanced the date for ending the CWA expenditures, and a cruel demobilization and disorganization of the system has ensued.

Yet Mr. Roosevelt cannot possibly believe that the need for direct relief of the unemployed by the federal government has passed. While the ranks of jobless have been reduced somewhat since this time last year, the number of unemployed is appallingly greater than at any period in the country's history, and there is not the slightest indication of a change in this prospect at any time in the discernible future. So far as factories go, the index of employment, which in March, last, reached a low of 55, had risen only to 69 in January, with the year 1926 as 100. Factory pay rolls, which touched bottom in March, last, at 33, had risen only to 49 in January. The returns of the American Federation of Labor indicate that there are still from 10,000,000 to 12,000,000 unemployed in the United States, a fifth of its normal wage-earning population.

The country has been appalled by the sudden dislocation of an organization which was caring for some 4,000,000 persons, and serious disturbances, not to say riots, are inevitable. It must be understood that men and women will not starve or go homeless in an era of material overabundance with the same stolidity that they may be expected to exhibit in a period of scarcity. Americans will not, and should not, allow themselves to be pushed to the wall by an Administration which has destroyed hogs and cotton because of unmarketable surpluses. Moreover, the demobilization of the CWA endangers everything so far achieved or projected in the recovery program. As the New York *Evening Post* puts it:

> CWA demobilization means lowered mass purchasing power, a glutted labor market pulling down the wage standards set in the NRA codes, a slackening of business activity. How can business, on that basis, be expected to shorten hours and raise wages even farther? The federal government must do its part by increasing rather than decreasing its expenditures for revival and relief.

Speaking for the business community, the New York *Journal of Commerce* says:

> The increased purchasing power that would be released through shorter hour and higher wage provisions in the codes would be largely offset by the reduction in buying power caused by CWA curtailment, leaving industry holding the bag at a time when many enterprises may prove financially unable to do so.

Although *The Nation* has questioned the probability that in the long run it would be possible to save an industrial system driven by the incentive of profits, it has regarded the Roosevelt program in general as the most intelligent means that could be taken toward that end. The demobilization of the CWA seems to be a deviation from the previous course. It betrays an absence of the political sense displayed by Mr. Roosevelt in his other major decisions.

Of course there have been graft and red tape and lack of coordination in the CWA. This was inevitable in an organization hastily developed to handle a vast and complex problem, but a pressing need was met. That need still continues, and the CWA should be maintained until something better is devised to replace it. Even with a more magical and complete industrial recovery than there is any reason to hope for, the country faces an indefinite unemployment problem due to the growing mechanization of industry. The way to deal with it appears to be a frank establishment of a dole based on European experience and practice. The CWA should not be abolished, but should be used as a transition toward a more scientific scheme.

Unfortunately Mr. Roosevelt seems to have been frightened suddenly by the bugaboo of an unbalanced budget. He is seeing the same specters at night that Mr. Hoover saw. The President should abandon his hope of balancing the federal accounts in 1935. The country is confronted with a vastly greater crisis than it had to meet in the World War but has not yet extended itself financially as it did at that time. The premature effort to make both ends meet is responsible not only for the demobilization of the CWA but for a return to the folly of last spring—starvation of federal departments in order to economize. *The Nation* protested then against the insane policy of discharging regular government employees by one door in order to save money to hire unemployed at another entrance. Fortunately this absurdity was stopped after a time, but at the very moment when Mr. Roosevelt is calling upon private industry further to reduce hours and raise wages, Postmaster-General Farley starts a counter-offensive by increasing the hours and reducing the earnings of postal employees. The policy bears especially heavily on the substitutes in the department. Their earnings, long precarious, have been reduced to as little, it is said, as $5 a week, and yet because they are nominally at work, they can get no assistance for themselves or their families from relief organizations.

Although the budget must be balanced sometime, the necessity is by no means immediate, and the way to do it is not to hamstring recovery by undue economies but to devise a new system of taxation which will draw heavily from the resources of the well-to-do. We have had enough of inflation and sales taxes—both levies on the poor. We need higher income taxes in the upper brackets and a new set of special imposts upon wealth. Meanwhile we hope Mr. Roosevelt will get over his ambition to balance the national accounts prematurely and will stop seeing things at night. His course in regard to the CWA is a Back-to-Hoover movement. The country will stand anything rather than that.

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Auto Workers in Revolt

MUST automobile workers go out on strike for want of sufficient will-power in the Administration to enforce its own laws? This is the issue behind the dispute in the Detroit industrial area, which threatens, as this issue of *The Nation* goes to press, to lead to the most disastrous labor warfare that has developed under the New Deal. The various locals of the United Automobile Workers are demanding: (1) that a referendum be held to determine whether they are the duly authorized representatives of the employees, with whom the manufacturers must bargain collectively concerning hours, wages, and working conditions; (2) that the manufacturers cease foisting company unions, without meetings or dues, and with officials paid by the management, upon reluctant employees who prefer to be represented by genuine trade unions; (3) that the manufacturers reinstate hundreds of employees who have been discharged because they were innocent enough to take Section 7-a at its face value, and accordingly became active in promoting and organizing an American Federation of Labor union.

These demands are modest; they represent a simple request that the New Deal be made more than a scrap of paper. But the automobile manufacturers persist in clinging to the *mores* of the old order. Their point of view was expressed by W. S. Knudsen, executive vice-president of the General Motors Corporation, in his statement before the National Labor Board. The position may be summarized thus: (1) The manufacturers see no necessity for conducting a referendum among their employees, since the latter already possess adequate machinery for collective bargaining in the shape of company unions which their bosses have kindly devised for them. (2) Even if it should chance that the employees, by a perverse twist of the inward Adam, desire to be represented by the United Automobile Workers, the manufacturers will never "recognize" the A. F. of L., though they would be willing to "deal with" the unions if the latter would first obligingly make public their membership rolls (to facilitate the drafting of blacklists). (3) It is not a point at issue that the manufacturers may have been discharging and laying off A. F. of L. workers for their union activities; the true point is that the A. F. of L. is up to its old monopolistic tricks of trying to force hundreds of thousands of workers into a closed-shop strait-jacket.

It became evident last summer, when the automobile manufacturers were extorting the "individual merit" clause to adorn their code of fair competition, that the industry was seeking to provide itself with ways of rendering Section 7-a nugatory. But the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce did not pin its entire faith on the merit clause. On the contrary, its individual members embarked in late August and early September on a simultaneous campaign of organizing company unions in order to "beat the gun" on the trade unions. Somewhat creakingly and tentatively, at first, the American Federation of Labor also busied itself with promotion work among the robots of the Michigan assembly lines. Any early head-on collision, however, was averted by the timely occurrence of the seasonal let-down in the early winter months—while the models were being changed.

It was during this lay-off period and the rehiring period which presently ensued that the potential conflict was brought to a head. In laying off workers the manufacturers—by chance—almost invariably picked those who had been active in the locals of the United Automobile Workers, regardless of years of service, seniority rights, or degree of skill. In rehiring workers the manufacturers—by equally fortuitous circumstance—excluded the same leading spirits of the A. F. of L. unions, despite the fact that simultaneously thousands of young, fresh, and unskilled recruits to the industry were being imported from other parts of the country to add to the stagnant pools of unemployment in Flint, Pontiac, and Detroit. Thus the United Automobile Workers' union was compelled to resort to the threat of a strike for survival; else its membership and its morale would have been destroyed through attrition. Whether, for strategic reasons, the union would have done better to call the men out and confront the manufacturers and the Administration with a *fait accompli* is another question.

Naturally, the situation is complicated by other factors besides the drive by the A. F. of L. to unionize the automobile industry. Basically, however, the dispute rests on a single factor. The Recovery Act calls upon all employers to cease resistance to the organization of trade unions among their employees. The government, if it cares to do so, can enforce this law of its own making. If it does not do so, the trade unions must fall back upon their traditional weapon of last resort—the strike. The principal danger is that the government may succeed, by some compromise, in averting the strike but fail to correct the union phobia of the automobile manufacturers. It is this phobia which has made inevitable almost all the strikes under the New Deal.

A New Triple Alliance

FOR the moment Austria's territorial integrity is assured. On March 17 Premiers Mussolini of Italy, Dollfuss of Austria, and Gömbös of Hungary signed a pact which pledged their governments to consult on all international issues and thus laid the basis for common action. Through this pact Italy becomes more than ever the determining factor in Austria's affairs. Hungary, having little or nothing to gain from the alliance with Austria *per se*, will be found on the side of its Italian ally in every important question. The new alliance makes Austria, temporarily at least, a toy in the hands of the Duce.

During the days of the Rome negotiations France announced through its semi-official press that it would agree to anything that would guarantee Austria's security. France's declarations left nothing to be desired. Indeed, all Austria's well-wishers—the British, the French, and the Italians—outdid one another in their praise of the "calm firmness" with which Chancellor Dollfuss had "averted the great danger that threatened the Austrian republic" in February. But when the question of concrete assistance for bankrupt Austria arose, the "strong man" of Italy was the only statesman in Europe to take the initiative.

The Rome conference showed Il Duce as a master-diplomat. By shrewd manipulation he impaired Austria's power to make its own international decisions, forestalling the possibility of its casting its lot later on with Great Britain

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or France in a Balkan federation controlled not by Italy but by one of the other great continental Powers. He knows that an alliance of the Danubian states without Austria and Hungary is impossible. By a cunning maneuver the Italian Prime Minister has effectually blocked any action to form such a federation without Italian cooperation and consent.

What have his allies received in return? The two protocols of the pact which deal exclusively with economic affairs outline the price that Italy is prepared to pay, although details will not be forthcoming until April and May, when further discussions are to take place. Both agreements—the one among Italy, Austria, and Hungary, and the other between Italy and Austria only—pledge the signatories to foster their mutual commercial interests by granting preferential treatment to exports. To Hungary Italy promises the purchase of larger quantities of farm products, to Austria greater consideration in the importation of manufactured goods. Gratefully Dollfuss and Gömbös accepted the offer of free port privileges in Trieste and Fiume, an arrangement by which Mussolini gets much more than he gives since it encourages the development of Italy's Adriatic harbors at the expense of Hamburg and Bremen, the ports which have hitherto handled most of the Austrian and Hungarian trade.

That the Dollfuss Government is fully conscious of the limitations these contracts impose upon it can hardly be doubted. It accepts them as a last means of defense against the coming Nazi attack—too late, however, to be really effective. The Chancellor's supporters at home are rapidly evaporating. On the day Dollfuss departed from Rome the leaders of the Heimwehr met in a conference which refused to consent to the incorporation of the Heimwehr in the "Dollfuss Front" and announced its establishment as a sort of superstructure for the new Austrian state. Between the agrarian Landbund, officially still a part of the Dollfuss coalition, and the Heimwehr there has broken out a bitter feud, in which several of the peasant leaders have been arrested. The Austrian peasant movement has always inclined strongly toward the National Socialist point of view, and the Landbund, though numerically not strong, has established its influence over the Christian Social peasant population. In recognition of its growing power Chancellor Dollfuss intimated just before he left for Rome that he would appoint Bachinger, Landbund leader of Upper Austria, Minister of the Interior in his Cabinet. This the passage at arms between the Landbund peasants and the Heimwehr has made impossible.

In the existing situation the Chancellor will find himself obliged to give the Heimwehr a Cabinet majority. This will ultimately mean the elimination of the Christian Social Party from the government and an open rupture between this powerful party and the Dollfuss regime. Austria is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, and the influence of the church party there is incomparably greater than that of the Catholic center in Germany. The Heimwehr may succeed in driving out Christian Social politicians by terrorism and force of arms. It will find that uprooting the church from its intrenched position is another matter.

In Austria's internal situation the Rome conference has made no change. Dollfuss has no support among the masses. The political trickery which has held him in office so long is losing its effectiveness. The Dollfuss house of cards is ready to collapse.

Save the Grown-ups!

IT has recently been announced that Mrs. August Belmont will devote much of her time to the Motion Picture Research Council, now engaged in making a survey of the influence of moving pictures on children. The council has already established that the young are devotedly fond of the movies and that gangster films do not induce quiet sleep. Neither of these facts is particularly surprising, but it is doubtless good to know them authoritatively. There is, however, one thing which worries us: granted that harm is done to children by movies which would be more suitable for adults, what about the harm done to adults by movies more suitable to children? This is an aspect of the subject to which no one seems to have paid much attention and which we hope Mrs. Belmont will consider. After all, the young do grow up. If they learn some things they are not old enough to know, at least the time will come when they are old enough to know what they have already learned. But the state of the adult who lives perpetually in a childish world is more serious for himself and others. He votes. He writes letters to the newspapers. He dominates censorship boards. If the reformers have their way and make all public entertainment safe for children, then who is going to protect the minds of men and women? We are ready to stake a life subscription to *The Nation* against a bound volume of *Babies—Just Babies* that for every child who knows more than he should there are ten grown-ups more innocent than they ought to be.

Offhand the best way of dealing with the problem would seem to be to apply in reverse the various devices invented for the protection of children. To begin with, there would be, of course, a Board of Adult Censorship whose business it would be to examine all films from the standpoint of their intellectual maturity and forbid the showing of those plainly contrary to adult common sense or tending to encourage an infantile attitude toward the problems of government or sex. Doubtless some would need only to be modified. Of course the board would have the same power of suggesting changes possessed by the Hays organization. Thus it might, for example, insist upon the removal of the suggestion that the heroine who works the badger game as a profession is really a good girl at heart, and it might issue some such order as, "Make it perfectly clear that the erring wife was not saved from herself on four separate occasions by the miraculous intervention of chance."

All the other devices invented for the protection of children could be similarly adapted to the protection of adults. Thus the Chicago "pink ticket" could be supplemented with a blue one meaning, "For persons under sixteen years of age only"; and other pictures nearer the border line could be exhibited in theaters posting the sign: "Parents admitted only when in the company of children." Of course some additional provision would have to be made for the needs of those who have demonstrated their inability ever to rise above the childish level. Cards could be issued giving them the right to attend children's entertainments. Moreover, and in order to protect the feelings of such persons, we have already thought up a nice euphonious name for these cards. They could be called "Peter Pan Certificates."

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Issues and Men

The Plight of Higher Education

Portland, Oregon, March 14

I HAVE just spent twenty-four hours within the precincts of a university with whose activities I have been more or less familiar for so long that I am afraid to say when that acquaintance began. I found it enormously improved since my last visit. New and attractive buildings have added tremendously to the development of a campus whose glorious trees and wonderful lawns are not surpassed, I am sure, by those of any other. But what I heard about the plight of education in this State filled me with dismay. The student body has decreased from about 3,300 to 2,000. Many of the present students are continuing with the greatest difficulty, and there are cases of real undernourishment. I heard of one student whose work improved enormously when it was arranged that he could get one square meal a day, and of another who was trying to live by an expenditure of only $1.35 a month. It seems to me that as long as there is one such student attending a university its existence is justified.

But the students are not the only ones who are suffering. The university itself is in straits as a result of the tremendous decrease in its revenues. The instructors and professors look with envy upon teachers in other States who have taken only a 10 per cent cut in their salaries. Some of those here have had to accept a decrease of more than 50 per cent. The library has only the slenderest means, chiefly an endowment fund established by my father some fifty years ago. Some of the most important books can therefore not be purchased. It is hard to see how the university can keep up with the newest developments of knowledge in any field.

Again, the teachers are appalled by the fact that many Oregon schools were actually closed for the rest of the school year at Christmas time—I mean small, rural public schools. They ask themselves whether, if this continues long, there will be enough students sufficiently trained to take a university course. But while they are suffering, the United States government continues to waste money upon military training, and compulsory drill is still enforced, although the faculty upheld it by only four votes when they voted on it a few weeks ago after a vigorous undergraduate campaign against it—a campaign that ought to have succeeded if only because from the point of view of modern warfare every cent spent upon the old-fashioned drill in our colleges is absolutely wasted. If the government wanted to help where help is needed it would turn these wasted funds over to the underpaid faculty.

The picture I have presented varies only in degree from what I have seen on other campuses on this trip through the West. It has set me to wondering whether the teachers in our higher educational institutions ought not to come together and demand, in this hour of codes, a code for universities. If the President thinks it necessary to fix a minimum wage for mine workers and factory workers and laborers in the oil industry, why not a living minimum wage for college professors? Why not establish an ethical code for the conduct of boards of trustees of universities in their relations with both students and teachers? Above all, college teachers in a State like this—yes, in every State—ought now to organize in unions, following the example of editorial writers and reporters. Is not this hour of revolution the time for them to demand representation upon the boards of trustees, to acquire some voice in how much freedom there shall be upon the university campuses and what shall be taught and not taught? Mr. Roosevelt declares that he is freeing industry from innumerable shackles. Why not strike a few from the wrists of university professors?

I have something further to suggest. I think that the entire life of the university should be built around the existing economic crisis; that the first function of such an institution should be to keep the students and the faculty currently aware of the momentous changes that are going on in our economic, social, and political life. Does that sound ridiculous? Well, if we think back to the year 1917 it was not considered ridiculous then to rebuild the whole life of the universities and colleges around the business of teaching youth to go overseas and slaughter fellow human beings. Schools were made merely institutions of hate and misrepresentation. Every scholarly protest was abandoned or subordinated to the great task of making the world safe for democracy, and professors were drafted in large numbers for service in Washington or abroad. The crisis is pregnant now with far greater consequences for the future of American life. Is it really foolish to suggest, therefore, that the universities busy themselves primarily with what is happening in Washington? Dean Russell of Teachers College has admirably pointed out that if the electorate is to have any hope of saving America from a permanent dictatorship, it must become sufficiently well informed as to what its rulers are doing to be able at least to criticize and control them. He thinks, and I with him, that the colleges and universities of the country have a special call to furnish the public with the necessary knowledge to keep its rulers in check. He believes that our entire education must be reoriented for this purpose.

At least somebody ought to call President Roosevelt's attention to the dire distress of so many of our schools of higher learning, which ought to be the most cherished institutions in our entire national life. It is all very well to build concrete roads and dams and put young men into the forests, but it is an infernal outrage in this national emergency to approve a bill for the expenditure of $500,000,000 for warships when the price of even two battleships expended upon our universities would bring hope and cheer, yes, decent sustenance, to students and teachers on a thousand campuses. Can there be any question which expenditure would really make for the true preparedness of this country for the tasks and dangers and infinitely difficult problems of the future?

Oswald Garrison Villard

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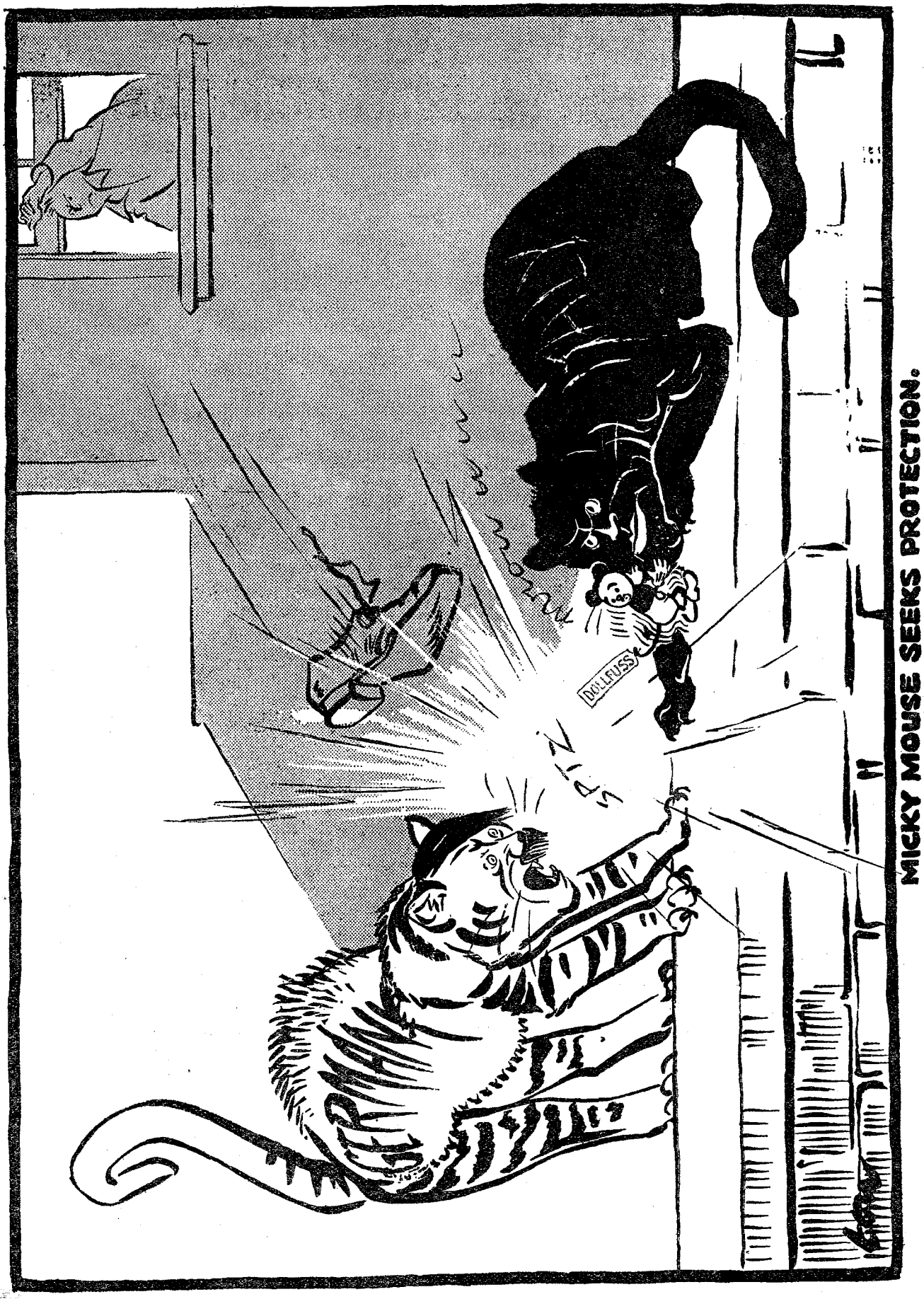

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The Consumer vs. the NRA
III. What Shall We Do About It?

By JAMES RORTY

THE question in my title is more or less rhetorical. It is probably not in the nature of Mr. Throttlebottom, the ultimate consumer whom nobody knows, to do anything about it, except to stop consuming. That hurts business, but it hurts Throttlebottom even more—the poor fellow wants to eat.

The difficulty would appear to be that Mr. Throttlebottom, when finger-printed, may turn out to be anything from a coal miner to a white-collar worker, to a farmer, to a retail grocer, to a chain-store or department-store buyer, to a government purchasing agent. The line-up under the NRA is a struggle for power between buyers and sellers, or, more accurately, between racketeers and suckers, between big fish and little fish; and the roles are constantly shifting. Theoretically, the Throttlebottoms, the ultimate suckers, are represented at Washington by two guardians, the Consumers' Advisory Board of the NRA and the Consumers' Council of the AAA. But for various reasons, chief of which is perhaps the fact that our daily and periodical press functions in the interest of its advertisers rather than of its readers—of sellers as against buyers—the guardians of the Throttlebottoms have had little success thus far in locating, organizing, and inspiring to action their constituencies. Nor have the Throttlebottoms been any more successful in locating, organizing, and inspiring themselves.

Let us start with the Adventures of the Consumers' Advisory Board of the NRA and the Consumers' Council of the AAA in Search of Their Constituencies. Right from the beginning they had plenty of hot news to tell. But that news, embodied in briefs and press releases protesting against monopolistic price-fixing and open-price clauses in the codes and agreements, against the failure to develop consumer standards, and so on, had to get past General Johnson and also Charles Michelson, press director of the NRA. And if it successfully ran that gauntlet, there was always the possibility that the papers wouldn't consider it fit to print.

The guardians had to stomach that because they had no power; they were merely "advisers." It may be alleged that the net effect of their advice was in a few cases to induce the big industrialists who were writing the codes to take it easy—to cut Throttlebottom's throat, and ultimately their own throats, gradually and scientifically rather than hastily and crudely. Not that the guardians were not entirely sincere and often courageous and resourceful in their attempts to protect the consumers. It was merely that the NRA "operation" did not envisage any fundamental economic reorganization; instead, it undertook, in effect, to humanize and rationalize the era of mutual throat-cutting which American capitalism had entered. The guardians of the consumer, while violently protesting against this process and rather freely characterizing it as a repetition of German cartelization, were, in the nature of the case, assisting in bringing it about by checking and correcting the price-raising and standards-debauching excesses of the industrialists.

They worked hard and nobody thanked them for their pains. Alvin Brown, executive officer of the NRA, suggested in a press interview that the Consumers' Advisory Board was very naughty and uncooperative, and might have to be abolished. To balance this, when last September the long-sought constituency of the Consumers' Advisory Board showed up in Washington, the first thing they did was to demand that the board resign in a body in protest against the betrayal of the consumer which was being written into the codes!

It was a slim constituency, centering in New York and calling itself the Emergency Conference of Consumer Organizations. Among those invited to belong to it were the Cooperative League of the United States, Consumers' Cooperative Services, Inc., Community Councils, the Consumers' League, the Consolidated Home Owners' Committee, various representatives of purchasing-agent and standards organizations, and Consumers' Research.

In the showdown it was only the last-named organization that came through with consistent moral and financial support for the energetic if limited activities of the Emergency Conference spokesmen—J. Charles Laue, Meyer Parodneck, Frederick Hoisington, and others. James Warbasse, founder of the Cooperative League, was on the Consumers' Advisory Board, and had succeeded in getting Presidential intervention to prevent the extinction of the farmers' oil cooperatives in the Middle West, which were threatened by the original version of the oil code. He didn't want to resign, although resignations and threats of resignation have been pretty much the order of the day since the Consumers' Advisory Board was first set up. Moreover, the board was making some progress, and playing for time. Robert Lynd's report urging the creation of a consumers' standards board got past the censor, and even drew some grudging attention in the press. And when Mr. Laue, secretary of the Emergency Conference and perhaps the most impassioned impersonator of Throttlebottom who has appeared to date, induced Senator Nye to make a documented criticism of the NRA on the floor of the Senate, it was a report of the Consumers' Advisory Board that supplied the dynamite.

It is interesting to compare Senator Nye's speech as delivered with the highly condensed and edited versions which appeared in the newspapers. You who have not read your *Congressional Record* got the impression doubtless that what the Senator was exercised about was the plight of the "little man"—the small manufacturer and retailer. As a matter of fact, the Consumers' Advisory Board report spilled the beans pretty completely, and the Senator used most of it, showing that not merely the small manufacturer and retailer but also the ultimate consumer was on the rack. But Throttlebottom doesn't advertise, whereas small manufacturers and retailers do. So the "little man"—the little seller—got a break in the news, whereas Throttlebottom, the little buyer, got no break at all.

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Meanwhile the Consumers' Advisory Board and the Consumers' Council, still trying to organize their constituencies, called a Consumer Conference at Washington on December 15, at which over twenty national and local consumer and quasi-consumer organizations were represented. The conference elected Leon Henderson, director of the Remedial Loan Department of the Russell Sage Foundation, chairman; Father John A. Ryan, of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, vice-chairman; Mrs. John A. Boyle, of the Consumers' Council of Washington, D. C., treasurer; and Miss Alice A. Edwards, of the American Home Economics Association, secretary. The conference sent out ten rather lively and well-edited information bulletins, which reached a circulation of 400 and then died for lack of funds.

Foiled again! But Throttlebottom's guardians in Washington were determined to dig up their constituencies. If Throttlebottom didn't exist, it would be necessary to create him, and Professor Paul A. Douglas, of the University of Chicago, was the Pygmalion assigned to the job. His first proposal was to set up Consumer County Councils in every county in the United States. What kind of councils? Who would run them? What would they be supposed to do, and what would they actually do?

Professor Douglas's published writings indicate a clear awareness of the striking resemblance of the NRA operation to the cartelization job done so much more efficiently by the Reichsverband der Deutschen Industrie, and presumably he didn't like the ambiguous role played by the Consumers' Advisory Board and the Consumers' Council any more than did other guardians of Throttlebottom in Washington. But he saw too, as did the others, that these more or less hamstrung boards were able to keep important issues alive, and he hoped, with some reason, that the movement of events would throw some actual power into their hands. The county councils, he thought, might be a means to this end, if they could possibly be kept out of the hands of the realtors, the Rotarians, the chambers of commerce, and the like. I cannot quote Mr. Douglas directly, but it is reasonable to suppose that he hoped to create county councils composed of genuine Throttlebottoms, of angry, alert, and determined suckers, as opposed to the already well-organized county racketeers.

To this end Mr. Douglas consulted membership lists of Consumers' Research and other sources that might yield authentic Throttlebottoms. He labored enormously, both to secure a suitable personnel for the councils and to obtain authorization for the functions which he wanted them to fulfil. These proposed functions originally included the right of the county councils to express themselves in matters of public policy and their right to devise and put into effect improved means for the distribution of commodities and services. Obviously, plenty of dynamite was concealed under these euphemisms, and they were ruled out. At the end of two months, Professor Douglas emerged with a pale shadow of his grandiose scheme in the form of authorization to set up, experimentally, 200 councils, whose functions were limited to investigating, and if possible adjusting, undue price increases, and to acting as channels of information to the consumer. (For some reason Mr. Douglas seemed to feel that the ordinary press channels were inadequate.)

The membership of the councils was to be composed of laborers, housewives of moderate means, professional people, dirt farmers, and home economists. The members were to serve without salary and without any allowance for secretarial assistance.

Professor Douglas's period of service with the Consumers' Advisory Board ends April 1. As to what will happen after that to the 200 councils, anybody's guess is good.

The Emergency Conference of Consumer Organizations continues to function aggressively, but without funds and without representing anybody except Consumers' Research and the small group of cooperators, economists, and statisticians who do the work. Meanwhile, a newly organized group, the New York Metropolitan Consumer Conference, has been set up with the initial object of resuming publication of a consumer bulletin like the discontinued publication of the extinct Consumers' National Conference. The organizing committee of the new group includes Professor Arthur Robert Burns, Professor Eveline Burns, and Professor Schuyler Wallace, of Columbia University, Paul Kellogg and Mary Ross of the *Survey,* Professor Leroy Bowman, L. E. Woodcock of the Eastern States Cooperative League, Mrs. Idella Swisher of the League of Women Voters, and Mary Arnold and Dorothy Kenyon of Consumers' Cooperative Services, Inc.

In the foregoing cursory survey of what has been done to organize a consumer-pressure group, much has been omitted for lack of space. I think, however, it answers fairly enough the question as to what Throttlebottom has done about it to date. As to what he might do about it, the writer has a few tactical suggestions, which, however, are more or less based on the organization of a much larger and more representative pressure group than is at present in existence. It should be remembered that the consumer can, as a last resort, crack the whip of a more or less organized buyers' strike. With this threat in reserve I suggest the following:

1. A demand upon the National Publishers' Association and all the other numerous official organizations of the daily and periodical press, including the newly organized Newspaper Workers' Guild (Heywood Broun attention), for an investigation of what would, I believe, be disclosed as the most outrageous campaign of coercion, suppression, distortion, and misrepresentation in the history of American journalism. This campaign has been directed specifically at the Tugwell bill but also at every other NRA development threatening the advertising business. I think Mr. Broun and Mr. Marlin Pew, editor of *Editor and Publisher,* would be excellent people to head such an investigation.

2. An investigation, initiated by militant labor groups and directed at the A. F. of L. bureaucracy, to determine why organized labor, through its official spokesmen at Washington and elsewhere, has failed to give active support to the Tugwell bill and to the standards movement in general. In this connection special attention should be given to Chester W. Wright's International Labor News Service.

3. A coincident demand for a Congressional investigation of the NRA with respect to its failure to protect the consumer interest; this investigation to include a thorough housecleaning of the lobby against the Tugwell bill and the performance of the press in this connection.

That may seem to be a large order, but Throttlebottom, unless he really likes his present sucker role, might well be interested. He is the consumer, and he wants to consume something more edible than inflated dollars. To this end, it is high time he began to act in his own interest.

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Cuba's Troubled Waters

By CLARA PORSET

Havana, March 14

ALTHOUGH the present state of unrest in Cuba, which has reached a new degree of intensity in the last two or three weeks, must be considered part of the universal class struggle, it is greatly aggravated by local factors which give it a peculiar aspect. Cuba is typical of all countries where the privileged classes exercise unlimited control for their own exclusive benefit, and in pursuance of their aims suppress labor organizations and without scruple employ armed forces. The conflict under these circumstances reaches a pre-revolutionary temperature; it is marked by accumulated injustices and persecutions from those who consider themselves owners of the country and by discontent and agitation on the part of the oppressed classes. What makes Cuba's situation different and intensifies the antagonisms is that the struggle of our working classes does not develop solely within national limits but is obliged also to cope with the more powerful forces of foreign imperialism, in which, of course, the North American is predominant. Capital in Cuban counts at present—as it always has counted—on the support and guidance of North American diplomacy and on the consequent support of the Cuban army and government. The promotion of Colonel Batista from the ranks to the highest post in the army as a result of the coup of September 4, which was one of the obstacles to recognition by Washington of the Grau administration, prevented also the collaboration of other parties with President Grau. Now, Batista is a sort of handy man of Ambassador Caffery and the chief support of the Mendieta Government, which was formed precisely by those parties which had previously refused to cooperate with Grau. The government of President Mendieta is an obstacle to the revolutionary progress of Cuba. Its different factions block every attempt at constructive measures. However, there seems to be one point of agreement—a respect for the wishes of foreign capital.

A few hours after the inauguration of President Mendieta, electricians from the U. S. S. Wyoming, anchored in Havana harbor, took control, under the protection of the army, of the local light and power plant in order to break the strike then in progress. This was hotly resented by the workers, and distrust and discontent grew. Subsequent acts of violence committed by the army caused the labor unions to be aware of their danger. A number of strikes resulted.

The sugar crop, the backbone of Cuban economic life, is under the control of the large estates. February 15 was set this year as the date for starting the grinding of sugar cane. Before the grinding began it was necessary to take steps to insure an uninterrupted process. The chief point at issue was the profit to be obtained by the owning companies. The matter of wages was a minor consideration. Wages now average fifty cents for a fifty-six-hour week and are paid in the majority of cases not in cash but in credit for food and clothing sold at the plantation-owned store at prices not subject to competition. If protests arise among the workers, the army can always be called in by the managers to check them "peacefully." A telegram from the chief of the rural military guard with headquarters in Havana, published recently in the press, indicates how these conflicts are generally settled. It read: "Some workers fled. Others are hidden. The rest arrested. All is quiet."

With the difficulty of the sugar-cane crop season in mind and to prevent possible demands from the workers, the government issued its Decree Number 3. Of frank fascist inspiration, the decree was concocted by the A. B. C. While pretending to regulate the rights of strikers, it in reality deprives them of all rights and leaves them bound and helpless. Decree Number 3 provides that eight days in advance of a proposed strike the union demands shall be submitted to one of the committees created for that purpose by the Department of Labor. The committees are local and national. Local committees are composed of three representatives of the union or syndicate intending to go on strike, three representatives of the owners of the company, and one representative of the Department of Labor—four against three. From the decision of the local committee the litigating parties can make an appeal to the superior national committee. This committee is formed of three men from the union or syndicate, three from the owning company, one from the Department of Interior, one from the Department of Commerce and Industry, and one from the Department of Labor. The Secretary of Labor is the presiding officer. In this case the scales may be weighed against the workers seven to three. The minority position of the workers in both cases is an indication of the partiality of the government for the owning class. In all disputes the laborers are eventually deprived of their rights. The present strike against the Cuban Telephone Company is a case in point. The workers accepted the arbitration of the local committee, whose decision was favorable to them. The Cuban Telephone Company then appealed to the national committee and accompanied this appeal by notes from Ambassador Caffery expressing his keen displeasure at the first decision and asking that more capable and unbiased men be appointed as representatives of the government on the national committee, which is to give the final decision!

The decree completely outlaws all general strikes designed to show the solidarity of the workers and "all strikes that may place the inhabitants of the island in a state of danger for lack of light, water, telephone, telegraph, medical or pharmaceutical assistance, and of all fire-fighting and transport services." Penalties are drastic for unions or individuals that violate the decree or refuse to submit to it or make propaganda against it. Labor organizations violating the provisions of the decree are to be dissolved. Individual violators will be imprisoned or severely fined; bail is not admitted; foreigners are liable to be expelled from the island merely for participating in strikes.

The attempt to apply Decree Number 3 brought such disturbances that the government felt it necessary to issue a new one to reinforce it. Decree Number 51 appeared. This is pompously called "for the defense of the republic." It goes, of course, a step farther than Decree Number 3. Any

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infraction of the latter is now classed by Decree Number 51 as "an offense against the republic," as is the presentation of new demands by any union or member of a union within six months after the presentation of a previous demand, whether the first was granted or not. Propaganda which may endanger the provisional government will also be considered an offense against the republic. Penalties for violation are even more severe. General Machado was never able to put through such a useful and elastic instrument of repression as Decree 51.

Decree 61, issued on March 9, definitely dissolves all unions and syndicates violating Decree 3. It has already been applied in the case of the Federation of Port Syndicates, which are now without legal existence. Objections to such arbitrary decrees as well as the need for improving the economic status of the workers have been at the bottom of the majority of the recent strikes. Clashes at the plantations of Baguanos, Preston, and Tacajo, and at the Daiquiri mines, in which workers have been injured or killed, are merely incidents in the army's ruthless suppression of proletarian movements demanding economic and social justice. Thus it is evident that the army assumes functions which pertain wholly to the civil authorities. In certain cases it not only assumes these functions but ignores the civil authorities completely. It does not limit itself to suppressing disorder but attempts to prevent even a discussion of possible strikes. This disregard of civil authority has gone to such extremes that it was one of the chief causes for the resignation of former Secretary of Labor Juan Antiga, who held office only twenty days. Dr. Antiga, who was fully aware of social trends in Cuba, accepted his appointment as head of the Department of Labor because of his long friendship with President Mendieta, but he was well aware of his lack of agreement with the otherwise reactionary Cabinet. As soon as he took office he began the task of relieving starvation among the workers. The matter appeared to him so pressing, as in truth it is, that he put aside other problems of the department. This procedure widened the gulf already existing between himself and the other members of the Cabinet.

The bland tolerance shown by the government to the Compañia Cubana Electricidad, a monopoly created by Machado in collaboration with the Electric Bond and Share Company, was put forward by Dr. Antiga in the press as the formal reason for his resignation. His withdrawal from the Cabinet is of the utmost significance. He was the only man in it who was aware of the needs of the workers and consequently able to respond fairly to their demands. His opposition to Decree 3 was so strong that he refused to sign it. He was in fact the only bond between the Cuban government and the Cuban masses.

President Mendieta's government is unfitted to solve or even ameliorate the problems of the Cubans. Reactionary and traditionalist, it respects too much the wishes of foreign exploiters. Its policy of iron suppression will only aggravate popular unrest. The strikes have failed at this point, but the unsatisfied demands of the Cuban masses will reappear. The party of the left, composed chiefly of the students who supported Grau San Martin, denies the government its cooperation. There is every indication that Mendieta will eventually be deposed unless Washington goes even farther in supporting him and, contrary to all declarations of a non-interventionist policy in Latin America, lands armed forces—an act that would of course meet with the most radical opposition from the Cuban people.

Europe Moves Toward War

III. Franco-Italian Rivalries

By JOHANNES STEEL

THE ties between the French and German steel and armament industries have existed for three decades now; not even the World War was able to loose them. The Société Lorraine Minière et Métallurgique, for example, is a leading French steel firm which in 1919 bought its plants from the German iron magnate Röchling, today an ardent National Socialist. The Société Lorraine is controlled by M. Alexandre Dreux, the prominent French nationalist, who in many important enterprises is a partner of Röchling. Röchling owns the big steel and iron works at Völklingen Saar. These works sell their products through the Société Française des Forges et Acières de la Sarre, which is controlled in equal parts by Röchling and Dreux. For many years now Röchling has been stumping up and down the Saar valley denouncing France, while Dreux in the same way has been assailing Germany and Hitler. In spite of this difference, these two influential representatives of French and German capitalism are great friends, and on October 2, 1932, the French Lorraine Minière of M. Dreux openly amalgamated with the Société des Forges et Acières de la Saare, Röchling's German group. The merged French and German firms continue to operate under the name Lorsar. This new company has a virtual monopoly of the Saar iron and steel output. Thus German and French capitalist groups control jointly an industry which is one of the main sources of the raw material for armaments.

In the light of these facts, French demand for security and German belligerence might seem to portend no immediate danger of war in Europe. It must be remembered, however, that even while the World War was going on cooperation between the French and German basic industries did not stop. In 1914, for example, Thyssen controlled the mines in the Briey basin and Röchling was a partner in the Valleroy mines. The products of these mines have always been one of the chief sources of supply for the French steel industry. During the war Thyssen and Röchling continued their partnership in these enterprises, and in order that the profits which accrued during the war years might be safeguarded for them, a special trust fund was established which after the close of the war automatically reverted to the German interests. A similar case was and is that of the de Wendel and Schneider-Creusot interests, which during the whole

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period of the war held mining concessions in Germany yielding some 2,500,000 tons of iron ore annually. It is certain that a new war would not disturb Franco-German industrial combinations.

It must, however, be realized that although the French steel industry may have a decided influence in French affairs, and Franco-German industrial relations are a factor to be reckoned with, there are other important elements in the complicated problems which confront France today. The seriousness of these problems may be summed up by saying that in the probable coming conflict France has nothing to gain and Italy and Germany have nothing to lose.

France is not merely a nation; in a larger sense it represents a distinct and very specific concept of civilization. Today it is the last stronghold of democracy on the continent of Europe. It has been able to impose its concept of civilization upon its colonial empire to such an extent that it is no matter for surprise to hear, as I have heard, a Negro deputy from one of the French possessions speak in the French Chamber about the Teutonic menace in Alsace-Lorraine. And France has been able to impose its culture not only on its colonial empire; it has also been able to establish an absolute cultural hegemony in Central and Southeastern Europe, in the Balkans, and in the Near East generally. In the years since the war France has cemented this supremacy with an economic penetration into all the countries over which its cultural influence extends. It has actively supported all those countries which are members of the Little Entente, not only by a close cooperation with their respective general staffs, but by loans and bilateral tariff agreements.

Today this economic and cultural hegemony is challenged, and the threat comes not so much from Germany as from Italy. Germany's challenge is relatively simple, while Italy's threat has many implications. Italy threatens not only the economic strange-hold of France on the whole of Central Europe but also French cultural supremacy in Europe and in many parts of the Near East. It is a struggle between two conceptions of society, democracy and fascism, both of which want to dominate Europe. And not only Europe, for during the last ten years Italian prestige has grown continuously in Syria, Tripoli, Algiers, and even Egypt. The Italian birth-rate, thanks to government bounties and encouragement, has risen to such an extent that territorial expansion will soon become a necessity. For years Italy has been dumping its surplus population into the Near Eastern possessions of France, where the Italians have grown into influential and troublesome minorities which have diverted to Italy much of the French export trade. The French silk and rayon industries have suffered particularly. In the last four years Lyons has lost 30 per cent of its trade with Tripoli, Algiers, and Egypt to Milan, whose industries are largely subsidized by the Italian government. Generally, in the whole of the Near East France has been on the retreat commercially. Italy has penetrated into all markets as far as Abyssinia, where early in this year it outbid France for important highway and water-power projects. At Constantinople, Athens, Salonika, Tirana, and, indeed, everywhere in the Balkans, French and Italian interests are clashing daily.

The governments of the two countries are doing their utmost to strengthen their respective allies. During the last six years Jugloslavia, for example, received from Czecho-Slovakia—through Austria, paid for by France—750 cannon of different calibers, 175,000 rifles, 1,500,000 shells, 3,200 machine-guns, 80,000,000 rifle cartridges, 85,000 kilograms of gunpowder, 250,000 kilograms of explosives, and 1,200 airplane bombs. This material was transported in 2,457 railway wagons, 635 of which were sent in 1932. During the last six months of 1931 France supplied Jugoslavia with 25 tanks and 23 heavy guns. Rumania received, in 1931 and 1932, 62 wagon-loads of various kinds of ammunition, 38 pieces of anti-aircraft artillery from Czecho-Slovakia, 20 anti-aircraft machine-guns from France, and 17 fighting airplanes from Poland. All these purchases were paid for by loans placed in France and were invariably financed by the Banque Union Parisienne and its various subsidiaries in Czecho-Slovakia and Poland. On the other hand Italy has not been idle, but has done its utmost to drive a wedge into the French "ring of security." Hungary, for example, has received the same measure of support from Italy that Jugoslavia has from France.

It is therefore no matter for surprise that the Austro-Italo-Hungarian conversations of last week had so little result, at least as far as Austria's interests were concerned. Austria controls most of the armament traffic of Central Europe. France will see to it that no Czecho-Slovakian arms are sent to Hungary, and will also prevent the transport of Italian arms through Jugoslavia and Rumania to Hungary. There remains only Austria, and this is the real reason that Italy will make every attempt to dominate Austria. In case of a conflict Mussolini counts on a Hungary which Italy has armed to threaten the northern frontiers of Jugoslavia.

There is one serious break in the French "chain on Europe"—Rumania. Rumania is officially a member of the Little Entente and for the last ten years has been economically dependent upon its great ally and protector, but there is today in Rumania a faction violently opposed to France. The fascist party of Rumania, led by the youthful and romantic Celea Codreanu, is anti-French and promises its followers that it will rid the country of the "corrupt" French influence. This so-called corrupt French influence is personified by Mme Lupescu, the mistress of King Carol, who with the court camarilla is pro-French. In the days when Carol and Mme Lupescu lived in France the French Foreign Office astutely succeeded in "obligating" Mme Lupescu, the only person who has any real influence over the moody Carol. Furthermore, Mme Lupescu, being Jewish, has no sympathies with the rabidly anti-Semitic Rumanian Iron Guards. This fascist organization is now actively supported by Italy as well as by the Hitlerites, who have financed Codreanu's newspaper, *Calendarul,* and have delegated a number of Nazi storm troopers to be instructors to the Iron Guards.

These are some of the moves and counter-moves made by European nations jockeying for position. There are of course, in addition, a great many imponderable factors which will sooner or later become important in the determination of the future of Europe. The most important of these from the French point of view is the steadily declining birth-rate of France and the rapidly rising birth-rates of Italy and Germany. The population policies of the latter countries, which force all civil servants to marry, levy special taxes on single persons, and give marriage loans to young couples, are as great a threat to France as is their active rearmament.

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Senator Wagner's New Labor Bill

By HERBERT RABINOWITZ

AFTER a long period of anxious waiting, the promised bill to put teeth in Section 7-a of the National Industrial Recovery Act and to give a firm basis to the National Labor Board has finally appeared. It was introduced by Senator Wagner, is backed by William Green and the American Federation of Labor, and is not without a certain aura of tacit Administration approval. The act, to be known as the Labor Disputes Act, confers much the same rights upon labor—to organize freely and to bargain collectively—as Section 7-a, but these rights, especially the various kinds of interference forbidden to employers, are more minutely particularized. The latter are termed "unfair labor practices," and the courts are given jurisdiction to enjoin them. The National Labor Board is set up as a permanent statutory body with wide powers of investigation and enforcement of the substantive provisions of the act, and it may enlist the aid of the courts in the enforcement of its orders. Its rulings on questions of fact are final, if sustained by evidence. It has powers of mediation and conciliation, and may act as a board of arbitration in controversies submitted to it. In such controversies its awards may be challenged, on certain grounds, in the courts. The act overrides Section 7-a only in so far as there may be inconsistencies between them.

This is, on its face, a most far-reaching measure, and if it is enacted into law, it will undoubtedly mark an event of first importance in the history of the New Deal. That the situation cries aloud for legislative rectification is scarcely any longer disputed in view of the widespread violation of the guaranties of Section 7-a, the amazing growth of company unionism, and the almost total breakdown of the Labor Board's prestige and authority in the Weir, Budd, and other conspicuous controversies. That Senator Wagner's bill is offered with the best of intentions, and that it would, if sympathetically administered, be of great assistance to labor in dealing with company unionism and other problems, is equally unquestionable. There are, however, a number of features in the bill as drafted which give one pause and seem to require important amendment.

In the first place, one notes that although the right to organize and bargain collectively is absolute in form, and although the prohibition of unfair labor practices is also absolute in form, nevertheless, the *enforcement* of these rights and prohibitions is in each case apparently left exclusively to the discretion of the Labor Board. Section 6 of the proposed law, which confers jurisdiction upon the district courts to restrain violations, provides that it shall be the duty of the several United States district attorneys to institute proceedings for such purpose, "but solely at the request of the National Labor Board." This specifically prescribed method of proceeding would certainly be held, according to the established precedents, to be the exclusive method of proceeding under this section, and individual employees or labor organizations would have no standing whatever in the courts to bring suit to enforce the act. The Supreme Court, interpreting very similar provisions in the Sherman Act, held: "Taking all the sections of that act together, we think that its intention was to limit direct proceedings in equity to prevent and restrain such violations . . . to those instituted in the name of the United States, acting under the direction of the Attorney-General. . . . It is a safe and conservative interpretation, in view . . . of the fact that . . . Congress has prescribed a specific mode for preventing restraints upon it, namely, suits in equity under the direction of the Attorney-General" (*Minnesota* v. *Northern Securities Company,* 194 U. S. 48, 71). Other sections of the law provide that the board *in its discretion* may institute hearings upon any alleged unfair labor practice, and it "is empowered" to prevent any person from engaging in such. But nowhere is the board required to take jurisdiction, or to make any order terminating unfair practices, or to request any federal district attorney to take action. In front of each of the fundamental rights granted to the workers by this revised Magna Charta, therefore, must be written a large "if"—if, that is, the National Labor Board sees fit!

It would surely be more in keeping with the spirit of the act, and a more cautious plan generally, to confer upon all interested parties, and not merely upon the board, the power to enforce the act. The anti-trust laws are not enforceable solely by the Federal Trade Commission; anyone injured not only can sue for triple damages—this was so even under the Sherman law—but, by specific language in Section 16 of the Clayton Act, is entitled to injunctive relief. The Railway Labor Act of 1926, upon which the present bill is said to be based, was held by the Supreme Court to be enforceable in equity by a labor union affected. Why should the rights of employees and unions be less in the present case? There is no assurance that the board will not, at some future time if not here and now, fall under the control of hostile forces or be paralyzed by internal dissension. No one can know that the board, even under reformed conditions, will fulfil every need of the working class and qualify itself as an impeccable and completely efficient trustee. Certainly, nothing in its difficult career to date justifies Congress in handing over to its keeping, in this blanket fashion, the rights of labor. Perhaps no such result is intended, but in that case the language should certainly be clarified beyond controversy, and the right of the individual employee or labor organization to seek relief should be affirmatively and expressly granted, as it is in the Clayton Act.

Another feature of the bill that arouses thoughtfulness is the scope of judicial review. There is, indeed, a very wide field left for judicial discretion. The court's jurisdiction (and the board's) obtains not in every case of a dispute or unfair labor practice but only where such dispute or practice "burdens or affects commerce or obstructs the free flow of commerce, or has led or tends to lead to a labor dispute that might affect or burden commerce or obstruct the free flow of commerce." This phrasing is intended to cope with constitutional difficulties respecting the scope of federal power, but as it now stands it is an invitation to the court to examine each individual case and see whether, in its judgment, the free

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flow of commerce is likely to be "obstructed" within the meaning of the act. This obviously leaves great latitude to the court, and may well be used to prevent action precisely in those cases where labor organization is absent or still in the formative stages and groping for a foothold—in other words, precisely where legal protection is most needed. The dismissal of a few men for agitation in a plant employing thousands, and able to call upon thousands of unemployed—how can that be said to obstruct commerce? Or, at least, what is the probability that the court will so declare? Even a strike of relatively large proportions would not necessarily give jurisdiction if the management were successful in finding sufficient strike-breakers to continue production substantially unimpaired; for the words "obstruct" or "burden" commerce could undoubtedly be interpreted to mean "substantially obstruct or burden." In a word, the weaker the labor power and the stronger the employer, the less the jurisdiction of the court to intervene! Would it not be preferable to confer jurisdiction, where the labor dispute or unfair labor practice occurs in what is clearly interstate commerce and therefore clearly within the federal power, over this whole class of cases broadly—as was done, for example, for the railroads in the 1926 act?

The power of the court is equally great, if not more so, in the matter of the review of the board's arbitration awards. It may vacate an award that fails, in its opinion, to be definite or "mutual" (whatever that may mean here), and it may correct an award "so as to effect the intention thereof and promote justice between the parties." No provisions such as these were contained in the Railway Labor Act of 1926, where court review was strictly and narrowly limited and indefinite awards were sent back to the arbitrators themselves for further explanation. These broad phrases in the present act are no doubt quite susceptible of innocuous interpretation, but they might be quite the reverse. One does not like to think what the power to correct an award so as "to promote justice between the parties" might mean in the hands of an unfriendly court, and after fifty years' experience of judicial nullification of administrative regulation in this country we may well be wary of such vague and sweeping language. It is the Labor Board and not the court that is to arbitrate.

It is also by no means clear what is the situation of minorities and dissenting individuals under the new bill. The act simply says that the board may hold elections—or "utilize any other appropriate method"—in case of disputes as to who are the representatives of the employees, that it may determine the unit of election, whether employer, craft, or plant, and that it may certify the "name or names of the individuals or labor organizations" designated to represent the employees. The form is the plural, and whatever the intention, there is nothing in the act that requires the board or the court to recognize the right of the representatives of the majority to speak for the whole body of employees. This possible perpetuation of the confusion resulting from dissenting minority groups with separate representation would seem to be inconsistent with the board's recent ruling in the Denver Tramway case and with Senator Wagner's announced opinion.

Turning to substantive provisions, we find the act widely heralded as restoring the legality of the closed shop. It was, of course, a scandal in the first place that Section 7-a, intended as a charter of new rights for labor, should have been subverted into a denial of the legality of the closed shop. As Senator Wagner says, "Congress never intended to place employees in a worse position than they were before the Recovery Act was passed." Nevertheless, even the new bill does not quite restore the worker to his pre-NRA status in this respect. Closed-shop agreements between employer and union are still forbidden except where a majority of the employees of the particular employer concerned are members of the contracting union, in which event these agreements may be entered into for a period not to exceed a year. This is, perhaps, not a very serious practical limitation, but what is more serious is the fact that the new bill likewise permits similar contracts between an employer and a company union. In other words, as the price of the partial restoration of the legality of the closed-shop contract, the prohibition contained in Section 7-a, forbidding employers to make membership in a company union a condition of employment, is now to be wiped out. The bill merely says "any labor organization" and holds the scales impartially between company union and non-company union. True, employers are no longer supposed to resort to improper means in setting up or dominating company unions, but the practical efficacy of these provisions has not yet been tested, and it is already charged that the failure to outlaw so-called "company welfare associations" will enable the employers to perpetuate the old evil. Moreover, company unions are already a fact, and a very prominent fact, in the field of industry, and it would be optimistic to suppose that even the most stringently worded bill would reduce them to insignificance. Something more than statutory or executive fiat is necessary, as experience under Section 7-a itself has taught, to overcome the mass resistance of big business to such provisions as these. At the best, the struggle will be long and bitter, and will be waged with every resource of economic power and legal obstruction. It has yet to be demonstrated that the Administration has either the will or the power to carry on such a struggle with the tenacity and severity essential to victory. In the meantime employers are free under the terms of the bill to enter into contracts with existing company organizations already dominated by the employer which will fasten them upon the plant irrevocably for a year, and are thereupon presumably entitled to an injunction against "interference by outsiders" for that period. Bad as is the current interpretation of Section 7-a, this prospect may be even more dangerous.

This brings us, finally, to the all-important question of the right to strike. The act declares that "nothing in this act shall be construed so as to interfere with or impede or diminish in any way the right to strike." The layman might think that here is a grant of the right to strike, but of course the language is purely negative; it confers no new rights, changes no prior rules, and certainly would not be construed as legalizing strikes called in contravention of contract. The layman is apt to forget, or does not know, that the right to strike is neither absolute nor constitutionally guaranteed. It became recognized in America mainly by virtue of judicial decisions, and exists only within the confines of such decisions. Strikes interfering with contract relations, sympathetic strikes, secondary boycotts, have all been declared illegal in the past by the Supreme Court, and would still be illegal unless the law were changed.

True, the worst effects of these rulings were removed by the Norris-LaGuardia anti-injunction bill of 1932,

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but the new act supersedes the Norris bill whenever the application of the latter's provisions "conflicts with the application of the provisions of this Act"—and it is a matter of statutory interpretation for the courts to construe and apply this language and to determine what constitutes such a "conflict." With the present express legalization of contracts between an employer and a "labor organization"—which, as we have seen, includes company unions—to employ only members of that union, the danger is that the court would permit injunctions against strikes called in contravention of such agreements, notwithstanding the Norris bill. It would be argued—probably successfully—that when the new law specifically legalized such contracts it meant them to have full practical efficacy, not mere theoretical validity; that such efficacy requires injunctive relief; and that the Norris bill is therefore *pro tanto* superseded. The disastrous implications of such a holding are apparent, and the bill should certainly be amended so as to bar them. Besides, broad as the Norris bill was, it did not reach all situations, and it left untouched the potentially grave penalty of damages. Surely, a bill of rights for labor should have written into it the rules enunciated by Mr. Justice Brandeis in his famous dissents in the Hitchman and Duplex cases, and the right to strike should be put upon less dubious ground than changing judicial discretion. It would be small comfort to future strikers to be told that their strike was illegal not because of the Labor Disputes Act of 1934 but because of the common law, the Clayton Act, or some preexisting federal enactment.

While the board's functions as an arbitrator are not compulsory in form, its authority is so wide and its discretion to intervene or not to intervene so unlimited that it is bound to exercise enormous sway in industry. So vital an enactment is entitled to and requires the closest scrutiny. As it stands, the new bill, with all its merits, is a bill primarily framed to confer rights and powers not upon American labor, but upon the National Labor Board itself.

"Man-Mengkuo"—a New Creation

By CRISPIAN CORCORAN

Tientsin, China, February 25

DESPITE censorship and all other known methods of hushing up the news, it has now become clear that "great" things are brewing in the fledgling state of Manchukuo. The Manchurian puppet government is to have a new constitution, a new emperor, and a new name—to say nothing of a new capital and much new territory. According to the most authoritative reports, the new constitution is to be a pocket edition of the Japanese constitution, with certain modifications, while the puppet "Chief Executive," Pu Yi, will resume the imperial purple to which he was born and perpetuate the glorious line of the Ch'ing dynasty. The name of Manchukuo, too, is considered too parochial a designation for a young and ambitious empire. The substitute suggested is "Man-Mengkuo," the Manchu-Mongol Federated State. This is an evident play for the adhesion of the marginal Inner Mongolian banners still under Chinese sovereignty and the disgruntled elements in sovietized Outer Mongolia. There is a school in Changchun which considers that even Man-Mengkuo will not be a durable name. They aim at a restoration of the old name for China, "Ta-Ch'ingkuo," the Dominion of the Great Ch'ing Dynasty. Such a label will obviously stand the utmost strain of territorial expansion.

However, we cannot concern ourselves too seriously with names. Much more necessary and cogent is an examination of the motives which have prompted the reorganization of the Manchukuoan paradise (which, one remembers, was to enjoy peace and tranquillity for millenniums).

The constitution of the new "empire," as stated above, will be modeled on that of Japan. In other words, the Emperor, while delegating a large part of his power to representative institutions and a ponderous civil service, will remain the supreme autocrat and last court of appeal in the realm. The Imperial Rescript will enjoy an eminence higher than any legislative enactment, and the whole territory and its people will be, in the last analysis, the chattels of the All-Highest, which he can dispose of in any way he wishes.

The Chinese press sees in this, in my opinion rightly, the foundation for a perfectly legal transfer of all the Manchukuoan dominions to Japan. Great is the acumen of the Tokio General Staff. Manchukuo is technically independent, and a violent laying on of hands might have awkward repercussions. But observe how conveniently an emperor can die childless and leave his realm to his beloved brother in Tokio. Or if not die childless, then at least retire to a monastery, following in the footsteps of his august ancestors. It is all so exquisitely legal, constitutional, and aboveboard.

Bazaar rumor has it, and the bazaars ought to know, for they are driving a fine trade in Manchu court gowns and moldy mandarin robes, that Pu Yi's new capital will be located in Jehol. Jehol, the "City of Emperors," of Sven Hedin, and of the Golden Pavilion at the Chicago Fair. But, the reader will exclaim, Jehol is situated in the remotest marches of Manchukuo, there is nothing to fit it for such eminence except moth-eaten Mongol tradition, and it is within a hundred miles of the Chinese frontier. That is true. One might add that Jehol has no drainage, no housing accommodation for even the most modest of parochial councils, no railways, no electricity, and no running water, not even a standard foreign spelling or pronunciation. Of course not. But it was once the summer seat of the Manchu dynasty, the Simla to Peking's Delhi. And what about Peking? I have put the question to many Japanese officers. They are apt to change the topic at this point, but their attitude says plainly, "Elementary, my dear Watson."

Meanwhile Japanese troops have crossed the boundary of Jehol province into Chahar and Hoper and are slowly absorbing villages and towns along the road to Peking. There are occasional Chinese protests but they die down, the Japanese explanation that they are following the "spirit" of the Tangku truce being invariably accepted.

Of course Pu Yi, when he is crowned on March 1, will graciously please to sign a new treaty with Tokio, confirming

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the status of the commander-in-chief of the Kwantung army as Japanese resident attached to the court. He will engage a Japanese "tutor," probably the septuagenarian Count Hayashi, veteran diplomat and statesman. After this he will honor Tokio with his presence and be sumptuously entertained by his august cousin Hirohito. This, too, is part of the plan.

Meanwhile, in territories already "consolidated" the Kwantung army is strengthening its control over the great South Manchuria Railway and over the new lines being built parallel to the Chinese Eastern Railway, spearheads pointing at the rich regions of the Soviet Far East. There is the front. China constitutes the rear. But every elementary military textbook mouths the age-old principle that one must safeguard one's rear and lines of communication before proceeding to the attack. The Japanese are ardent followers of orthodox texts, military and otherwise.

The next aim of the Kwantung army is to create a gigantic buffer state, effectively isolating Soviet Russia from China, which will comprise Manchuria, both Mongolias, the rich regions of Suiyuan, northern Shensi, Kansu, and possibly Chinese Turkestan, and, on the extreme east, a good part of the North China coast line. It is not so difficult as it sounds. As one military gentleman put it, "We must do only what Columbus did. Reach our objective and plant the flag there. I do not believe we shall encounter resistance."

Intervention in Fukien, in Shantung, or even in Canton may be resorted to to speed up this process. But one thing is certain. Once the rear is occupied and consolidated, the spearheads pointing at the Soviet frontier will advance "as trees walking," and the Samurai sword of General Araki will encounter the bayonets of the Red Army in the plains of the North.

In the Driftway

IN the spring the Drifter's fancy often turns to thoughts of retiring to the country and making a living off the land. And when he expresses his fancy some brisk young man with a knowing air always speaks up: "Why don't you go into the chicken business? I understand there's a great deal of money in it." And the Drifter is always tempted to reply: "Young man, there *is* a great deal of money in it. And the reason for that is that very little of it ever gets out." It is not for nothing that poultry-raising has furnished us with our most ominous proverb, which has to do with the hatchability of chickens.

* * * * *

A FAINT idea of the hazards of the profession may be obtained by opening at random any farmers' journal. Two or three issues are enough to convince the casual reader that the whole thing ought to be dropped quietly and forthwith. Chicken-raisers as a class are nervous and fearful, while the chickens themselves, aside from being silly-looking, must be anything but happy considering the variety and perverseness of the ills that chicken flesh is heir to. Here are just a few samples of the letters of chicken-raisers and the answers of editors culled from recent issues of the *Rural New Yorker* and the *New England Homestead:*

THE CHICKEN-RAISER: I have a disease in my flock. . . . I got them last year and around this time they went down with leg trouble, such as I would call paralysis.

THE EDITOR: Chronic coccidiosis and some obscure nervous disorders are believed to be causes of paralysis. . . . There is no cure . . . it is likely that complete disposal of the birds . . . will prove the most satisfactory procedure.

THE CHICKEN-RAISER: For the past five years I have been vaccinating my pullets against fowl pox, usually when they are about nine weeks old. But it seems to hurt them. Many die and I get in a bunch of trouble. . . . How early in a chick's life can I give safely linseed oil and turpentine?

THE EDITOR: Vaccination against fowl pox is usually done at from three to four months of age. . . . [Before giving linseed oil and turpentine] it would be well to wait until the presence of intestinal worms is evident either through droppings or after an autopsy [!] . . . It should be borne in mind that the mere giving of a dose or two is not ridding a flock of round or other worms. They are easily picked up again . . . and more thorough measures are required. ["Complete disposal" perhaps?]

THE CHICKEN-RAISER: I have a flock of 250 April-hatched pullets which seem to do nothing but neck molt. . . . I have all the skim milk the chickens will drink. . . . *I also keep laying mash before them at all times,* and have had the lights on them since October for two and a half hours in the morning.

THE EDITOR [after advising with not too much confidence a change of ration]: Make all changes somewhat gradually, however, thus avoiding a too sudden disturbance of the pullets' nutrition and *notions.* [Italics and amazement ours.]

THE CHICKEN-RAISER: It is now three times consecutively that I am operating my incubator and about one-third of the eggs do not hatch.

THE EDITOR: If you are now getting a two-thirds' hatch you have little to complain of.

* * * * *

IF any reader still contemplates going into the chicken business, let him look at the Drifter's last exhibit. The *Homestead* for March 3 printed an article on Controlling Vice Losses: Suggested Remedies for Cannibalism, Pickouts, and Prolapsus. "Because these troubles cause an enormous loss to poultrymen," the introduction points out, "Dr. R. C. Bradley . . . has issued a sixteen-point summary of suggested remedies." The Drifter presents only a few:

1. Watch birds constantly and market each individual offender.

3. Use for meat purposes birds showing signs of prolapsus as "they seldom recover sufficiently to warrant keeping."

6. "Tinker around" in the pens as many times a day as possible to take the attention of the birds away from themselves.

10. Place pine boughs in the pens for hens to pick on.

Even if the AAA should guarantee to pay the Drifter a handsome profit for every fowl he had to plow under, he would still refuse to go into the chicken business. He's damned if he'd be psychoanalyst to an introspective hen.

THE DRIFTER

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Progress at Oberlin

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

During this school year Oberlin College celebrated one hundred years of liberal tradition. Oberlin's history began with Abolitionist agitation, the establishment of a terminus of the underground railroad, and an escapade known as the Wellington rescue (a group of students traveled nine miles to a neighboring town and forcefully took a fugitive slave from a sheriff). Oberlin College was the first educational institution in America to open its doors to women and Negroes. It now has on the campus a Peace Society and a Cosmopolitan Club. Its administrators and faculty are constantly stressing the need for maintaining a plastic and objective attitude.

As Oberlin enters its second century, one of the first examples of this "plasticity and objectivity" is the official suppression of *Progress,* a student publication. *Progress* was published during the first semester of this year by the Oberlin Radical Club. The aim of the paper was to provide a medium for the expression of controversial opinion. This organ alone made it possible to present the "other side" of all pertinent issues. It was often critical of administrative action and of some of the more antiquated rules of the college, and of the capitalistic social scheme in general; but conservative opinion was invited and published. The organization has been dubbed "red" and "Bolshevik," but so far the "reddest" of its activities have been the circulation of handbills advocating the abolition of compulsory attendance at chapel and attempts to organize a cooperative bookstore and to hold meetings for the discussion of discrimination against Negroes. When recognition of the publication for the second semester was asked, the authorities denied the request.

We have heard many diatribes in Oberlin against European fascism and its policy of suppression of a free press. We have also been given constant assurance that in America none of these crimes against liberty would or could be committed. We should like to believe this. But in the face of the facts, how can we?

Oberlin, Ohio, March 7

ROBERT FRITZMEIER
HOMER HARTZELL
CHARLES OLDS

Unanimity and the League

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

Robert Dell, in his article Can the League Be Saved? which appeared in your issue of February 21, makes several misleading statements in respect to the unanimity rule. He states that "except for a few cases such as that of an inquiry into German armaments, unanimity is required for all decisions of the Council or of the Assembly of the League," and that "it is the rule of unanimity that paralyzes the League and is the fundamental cause of its failure." This is followed by the suggestion that "so long as decisions have to be unanimous Costa Rica or Panama can, at any rate theoretically, hold up the whole League."

Mr. Dell's first statement needs qualification. True enough, decisions of both Council and Assembly must be taken by unanimous vote, except where the Covenant or the terms of the treaties of which the Covenant forms a part specify the contrary. But the Assembly, at least, has found many devices for escap-

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ing the rigors of the unanimity rule. For example, the Assembly has held that the word "decision" refers only to the adoption of a resolution in which it is the intention to impose a definite legal obligation. Where it is only the intention to suggest, advise, or recommend, a "decision" is not taken and, consequently, unanimity is not required. It will be appreciated that a large and important part of Assembly action falls into this latter category. In fact, unanimity is only insisted upon in the Assembly for three types of resolutions: budgetary resolutions, resolutions purporting to interpret the Covenant, and resolutions inaugurating international conventions. In regard to budgetary resolutions it has become so much the custom of the minority to give way to the majority that on one occasion the Assembly President declared the budget adopted even though twelve states, including Great Britain, voted against it! Although unanimity is essential for the formal adoption of resolutions interpreting the Covenant, "defeat" by a minority made up of the smaller Powers does not prevent the interpretation from being accepted. Who doubts that the interpretation of Article 10 proposed by Canada is the interpretation accepted today in spite of its "defeat" by the negative vote of Persia? Only in the proposal of conventions has the unanimity rule proved an obstacle in the Assembly, and a study of the records will reveal that the chief offenders have not been states the size of Costa Rica and Panama but rather the Great Powers.

Although unanimity is much more generally insisted upon in the Council than in the Assembly, the probability of the *liberum veto* being exercised by a small state has been greatly reduced since 1926. It will be recalled that in that year, after obstruction by Brazil, Article IV of the Covenant was amended to permit the Assembly to fix by two-thirds' majority the rules dealing with the election of the non-permanent members of the Council. One of the rules adopted in accordance with the terms of this amendment permits the Assembly acting by two-thirds' vote to proceed at *any time* to a new election of all the non-permanent members of the Council. This rule, adopted deliberately for the purpose, virtually arms two-thirds of the Assembly with the power of recall. It would seem, therefore, that the unfettered right to obstruct the action of the Council by use of the *liberum veto* remains only for those few states which enjoy the favored status accorded to the Great Powers.

Baltimore, February 24 CROMWELL A. RICHES

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JAMES RORTY is preparing a book on advertising to be entitled "Advertising—Not to Praise."

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Books, Art, Drama

The "Odyssey" of Disney

I HAVE never particularly cared for the "Odyssey" of Homer. The edition we used in high school—I forget the editors' names, but let us call it Bwumba and Bwam's edition—was too small to hide a livelier book behind, and it was cold and gray in style and in content. All the amorous goings on of the story were judiciously left out. We pupils might, at that age, have taken a greater interest in T. E. Shaw's recent rendering, the twenty-eighth, by his count, in English; for bang-off in Book I the third sentence reads: "She craved him for her bed-mate: while he was longing for his house and wife." But there wasn't any such sentence in old Bwumba and Bwam. It was a pretty dull book to read. No matter how thin Mr. Shaw has sliced it, it is still, it seems to me, a pretty dull book to read.

The fact that the "Odyssey" is the "oldest book worth reading for its story and the first novel of modern Europe" makes it no more lively—to me, anyway—than does the turning of it into what Mr. Shaw's publishers call "vital, modern, poetic prose." There are too many dreary hours between this rosy-fingered dawn and that rosy-fingered dawn. The menaces in ancient Jeopardy were too far apart, the hazards prowled at too great distances, the gods maundered and were repetitious. Ulysses himself is not a hero to whom a young man's fancy turns in any season. The comedy of the "Odyssey" is thought by some students to be unintentional and by others to be intentional, and there must not be any uncertainty about comedy. But whatever may be said about it, the "Odyssey" will always keep bobbing up, in our years and in the years to follow them. The brazen entry into the United States of Mr. Joyce's "Ulysses" has most recently brought the "Odyssey" again into view; as the magazine *Time* points out to its surprised readers, "almost every detail of the 'Odyssey's' action can be found in disguised form in 'Ulysses.'" So, many a reader might naturally enough ask, what? So nothing—that is, nothing of real importance in so far as the "Odyssey" or "Ulysses" itself is concerned. The ancient story just happened to make a point of departure for Mr. Joyce. He might equally well have taken for a pattern Sherman's campaign in Georgia. Nevertheless, here is the old tale before us again not quite two years after Mr. Shaw went over the whole ground for the twenty-eighth time in English.

My purpose in this essay is no such meager and footless one as to suggest that it is high time for some other ancient tale to be brought up in place of the "Odyssey"—although, if urged, I would say the "Morte d'Arthur." My purpose is to put forward in all sincerity and all arrogance the conviction that the right "Odyssey" has yet to be done, and to name as the man to do it no less a genius than Walt Disney. A year or two ago Mr. Disney made a Silly Symphony, as he too lightly called this masterpiece, entitled "Neptune." Those who missed seeing it missed a lusty, fearsome, beautiful thing. Here was a god and here were sea adventures in the ancient manner as nobody else has given them to us. The thing cannot be described; it can be rendered into no English. But it was only a hint of what Mr. Disney, let loose in the "Odyssey," could make of it.

The dark magic of Circe's isle, the crossing between Scylla and Charybdis, the slaying of the suitors are just by the way; and so are dozens of other transfigurations, mythical feats of strength, and godly interventions. Mr. Disney could toss these away by the dozen and keep only a select few. For one: Ulysses and his men in the cave of the Cyclops. That would be that scene as I should like my daughter to know it first, when she gets ready for the "Odyssey," or when she is grimly made ready for it—I presume one still has to read it in school as I did, along with "The Talisman" and "Julius Caesar." Picture Mr. Disney's version of the overcoming of the giant, the escape tied to the sheep, the rage of Polyphemus as he hurls the tops of mountains at the fleeing ship of Ulysses and his men!

But I think my favorite scene will be (I'm sure Mr. Disney will do the "Odyssey" if we all ask him please) that scene wherein Menelaus and his followers wrestle with the wily Proteus on the island of Pharos. You know: the Old Man of the Sea comes up out of the dark waters at noon to count his droves of precious seals all stretched out on the beach. In his innocence of treachery or of any change in the daily routine, he unwittingly counts Menelaus and his three men, who are curled up among the seals trying to look as much like seals as possible. It doesn't come out, by the way, in any rendering I've read, and I've read two, just what the Old Man thought when he found he had four seals too many. Anyway, at the proper moment Menelaus and his followers jump upon Proteus. In the terrific struggle that ensues the Old Man changes into—here I follow the Shaw version—"a hairy lion: then a dragon: then a leopard: then a mighty boar. He became a film of water, and afterwards a high-branched tree."

How only for Walt Disney's hand and his peculiar medium was that battle fought! His "Odyssey" can be, I am sure, a far, far greater thing than even his epic of the three little pigs. Let's all write to him about it, or to Roosevelt.

JAMES THURBER

Crying in the Wilderness

A Journal of These Days. June, 1932–December, 1933. By Albert Jay Nock. William Morrow and Company. $2.75.

AGE has not withered and custom has not staled the former editor of *The Freeman*. Neither—be it hastily added—are there any signs of mellowing in this scornful and cantankerous diary. Every day for a year and a half Mr. Nock finds something new to hate, and one closes the volume with the conviction that the author has never been surpassed in the range and variety of his dislikes. One is also tempted to say that there is nothing human which is *not* alien to him, and that if his pessimism has ever been exceeded by anyone it is only by Max Beerbohm's Kolinyatsch, who, it will be remembered, scorned to rail merely at himself, women, or things in general after the fashion of his tame forerunners, but lavished an equally fierce scorn on children, trees, flowers, and the moon. Mr. Nock, for example, is particularly bitter against vitamins.

The casual dipper into the "Journal" may possibly come away with the impression that Mr. Nock's bile is stirred chiefly

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by American people, institutions, and government. Thus most statesmen of our recent past should be "boiled in oil." Thus also General Johnson's picture gives him a face "such as one attributes instinctively to a plug-ugly or a Bowery bouncer of the old days," while the only thing to be hoped for from Roosevelt is that he will proclaim himself king immediately in order that we may have the opportunity to behead him—the execution of Presidents being, unfortunately, not a custom. As for ourselves and the general atmosphere of our lives, words fail him and he is compelled to fall back upon others, quoting with approval the French journalist who called us "the only people who have passed directly from barbarism to decadence without knowing civilization," but finding a deeper satisfaction in the simpler exclamation of a Canadian who remarked, apropos the Lindbergh affair, "What newspapers! What a police! What a country!"

Nevertheless, one would be wrong in supposing that most other peoples—except the more than human inhabitants of Belgium—are, at most, more than unsatisfactorily better. Informed that his ship touches at London and that one may go ashore if one likes, Mr. Nock replies, "Not unless and until I could go at the head of 300,000 men"; meditating upon France he exclaims, "I am heartily in accord with Andrew Jackson, who roared, 'I know them French.'" One would also be wrong in supposing that anything is to be hoped for from a revolution either to the right or to the left. Mr. Nock hates Bolshevism as much as he does democracy, because, as one gradually discovers, the real trouble with the world is the people in it. "Not everyone who answers to *Homo sapiens* is human; relatively few are. . . . There is a greater difference between Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, Sophocles, and the man of the crowd than there is between the man of the crowd and the higher anthropoids; but in our institutional view, Socrates and the man of the crowd alike count as one." Even single tax—his old love—is a futile doctrine. It is "the best start toward civilization; but I have never propagandized for it, because our people would not know what to do with it if they got it."

So vigorous and entertaining a Jeremiah ought not, perhaps, ever to let us into his secret by confessing any of the things he does admire, and in Mr. Nock's defense it must be added that he neither mentions them often nor dwells upon them long. It is plain, nevertheless, that he likes "civilization" and even—or rather especially—some Americans. But one wonders why, with the tastes he has, he ever permitted himself that preparation for disappointment and bitterness which consists in looking for aristocratic tastes and aristocratic virtues in the mass of any people. There is much to be said for loving nothing but excellence and for despising with all heartiness anything that is not excellent. But there is nothing to be said for choosing the rare and then expressing enraged surprise that it is not found to be common. To live happily with Mr. Nock's opinions one needs to carry them farther or, at least, keep them purer than Mr. Nock, with the despised but still lingering virus of the reformer in his veins, is able to do. One needs to say firmly that intelligence, disinterestedness, taste, and charm—to say nothing of simple honesty—are uncommon qualities. One must add that since the world never was and probably never will be run by men possessing this combination of qualities, there probably never will be a time when they can be found very often or held in great general esteem. One must realize that excellence is something whose appearance is improbable, and one must take one's satisfaction in what one can find of it. But if, like Mr. Nock, one cannot help worrying because the world is not intelligent and decent and just, then one must either get a new philosophy or become, like him, more and more cantankerous and disgruntled.

A book so amusing to read as his "Journal" must have been some fun to write, but Mr. Nock has not the bounce of Mr. Mencken, whose opinions he shares. His tragedy is that he has never achieved Mr. Mencken's art of finding men entertaining *because* they are stupid. To the sage of Baltimore every new evidence of human depravity is—to use one of his favorite words—"exhilarating." Mr. Nock gets angry and then, when the anger is passed, he is only a little depressed. Perhaps he will some day get more faith in humanity; perhaps he will lose the very little he has. But he is not likely to be at peace unless he does one or the other. JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

The Oppermanns

The Oppermanns. By Lion Feuchtwanger. The Viking Press. $2.50.

THE objectivity which Feuchtwanger has practiced on remoter historical events he has now turned on Hitler's Germany. The matter aspires as much to the effect of the "Brown Book" as to the Book of Job, but it achieves more of the moving spirit of the document than of the poem. The author's present biographical center is the Jewish Oppermann family and all the tangents of its world; his polemic is the wounded dignity of man as a middle-class protagonist; his method is the assiduous, melancholy brushwork of an honest Dutch painter. This combination of the family as a cohesive unit, middle-class sensibility as a stage for action, and the metronome for a literary style, while it stirs us deeply, does not produce the right alliance of art and indictment for a work of great stature.

We have met the Oppermanns in literature before—the preoccupation of Jean-Richard Bloch, of Sholom Asch, of G. B. Stern, and of others—that family of numerous facets reflecting essentially the same inner light, deriving from a common lineage their talent, geniality, vanity, common sense, skepticism, vices, good-heartedness, and protective cunning. It is not as happy a pattern as it looks, for its use is paid for by some abstraction in character and stylization in form. Perhaps there is but one contemporary full and magnificent success of its kind, and that not about a Jewish family.

We come upon Feuchtwanger's Oppermanns in a moment of calm before the storm, a moment of security, material accomplishment, and spiritual assimilation. Before we are done this house is utterly in ruins. Slowly, artfully, the presentiments of trouble seep through the comfortable inclosure like tidal water through the holes of a defective dike. Three times we see the Oppermanns together, first at Gustav's fiftieth birthday, then in counsel over the impending disaster to their vast Berlin furniture business, finally, destroyed, dispersed, for but a moment, at a Passover dinner, in exile. On the way to the full debacle, however, we witness each individual Oppermann in the grip of an opposing force coming out of this newly hostile Germany. It is these individual wrestling matches between single Oppermanns and their fate that give the book energy and continuity. Dignified Martin Oppermann, with his non-Jewish wife, against Wels, the troop leader and manufacturer; the subtler defeat of Gustav, a lover of Lessing, women, and good living, whose literary protege, Gutwetter, rises from Jewish patronage to Nazi honors; Edgar, whose surgical experiments are monstrously perverted as ritual murder—these make up the Oppermann disaster in all its various phases. By contrast we see Martin's employee, Wolfsohn, a rung lower in the Jewish social and ethnic ladder, a man whose day is a chain of petty victories in the salesroom and a succession of his radio, his beer, his newspapers, his meals, and his armchair; a man lifted from his sordid, innocent indulgence into the bewildering farce of the Reichstag fire. But it is, finally, the chronicle of the young Oppermanns which touches moments of imagination, particularly that of Berthold, the student, who rather than publicly recant his humanistic leanings chooses to take his own life.

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We move from event to event with the facility of a movie camera bringing its focus on this or that moral center. The characters are projected symphonically through a kind of interior monologue and minute, intimate pantomime. Unwittingly, the author's protective irony in his preface, to the effect that he had to forgo photographic representation of individuals for a collective whole, has the truth of a critical statement. For we witness the losing fight of the Oppermanns as a unit, as if that unit had six fighting limbs and six simultaneous adversaries.

We ask ourselves what is the moral tissue of the Oppermann world that Germany is destroying? In Feuchtwanger's hands there is a light cynical admission of some middle-class corruption, perhaps the corruption of self-assurance, and the pervasive sentimentality of professional talent highly and blindly dedicated. There seems to be no escape for the Oppermanns, caught between a struggle for cultural self-intrenchment and their disinterested creative labor, except escape by the vicious blow of their enemies. Gustav alone (and rather late in the scheme of the book), by giving himself up voluntarily to the bestialities of the concentration camp, attempts the salvation of the Oppermanns. It is futile: "He merely saw things as they were and could not devise a way in which he could be constructively helpful. He ran a Marathon and delivered a dispatch case, but, alas, the case contained no message." Feuchtwanger quotes from the Talmud in extenuation of this Oppermann: "It is upon us to begin the work. It is not upon us to complete it." There seems no hope that the Oppermanns will complete it.

ISIDORE ABRAMOWITZ

William Carlos Williams

Collected Poems (1921-1931). By William Carlos Williams. With a Preface by Wallace Stevens. The Objectivist Press. $2.

OF Poe's critical theory Dr. Williams has written: "It is a movement, first and last, to clear the ground." This is a concise statement of the direction of his own verse. For the better part of his life as a writer he has been hacking away at all sorts of dead timber. Probably no one but Ezra Pound has done so much to remove the tangle of withered words, stock responses, overripe images, and decayed rhythms that encumbered English and American poetry twenty years ago. Except for one brief excursion from his clearing, Dr. Williams has stuck to the ax with a single-mindedness amounting almost to fanaticism.

While he thus carried on the work of early imagism, in the period represented by the present collection he brought something new: he shaped the fluid impressions of the imagists into the solidity and organization of his favorite contemporary paintings. The result is poetry that is clean and spare and that transmits all the light. If a single poem of his should cling to the mind as typical, it might well be the plain statement about Gay Wallpaper, beginning:

> The green-blue ground
> is ruled with silver lines
> to say the sun is shining
>
> And on this moral sea
> of grass or dreams lie flowers
> or baskets of desires . . .

But he does other things besides interiors and still-life; there is the drowsy stir of mean streets and the headlong movement of The Winds:

> flowing edge to edge
> their clear edges meeting—
> the winds of this northern March—
> blow the bark from the trees
> the soil from the field
> the hair from the heads of
> girls, the shirts from the backs
> of the men, roofs from the
> houses, the cross from the
> church, the clouds from the sky
> the fur from the faces of
> wild animals, crusts
> from scabby eyes, scales from
> the mind and husbands from wives

This poetry springs from more than a technique of looking: there is an ethos behind it. Dr. Williams conceives himself to be giving utterance to an American tradition which has not before found adequate expression in verse, the tradition of the Indians and of the pioneers at their best. He has praised the feeling for life of the early Americans for "its immediacy, its sensual quality, a pure observation, its lack of irritation, its lack of pretense, its playful exaggeration, its repose, its sense of design, its openness, its gaiety, its unconstraint. It frees, it creates relief." These are the qualities that the post-impressionists sought in primitive art, and Lawrence in his peasants—qualities, among others, for which some classicists love the Greeks. They are, furthermore, traits conspicuously lacking both in modern life and, until recently, in the modern arts. Dr. Williams believes that we do not need to hunt far afield when we can find them in our own background. For this reason he did not go with his fellow-poets into exile, but kept at his medical practice in a New Jersey town, with an obstinate conviction, doubtless, that some embers of the tradition remained to warm him who could seek them out.

Like all attempts to revive traditions, like all returns to "ancient springs of purity and plenty," this one has its pitfalls. Along with their now almost extinct virtues, the pioneers possessed certain less admirable traits which have been hardier: a suspicion of the intellect, a bluntness of psychological and moral perception, and a submergence of the imagination in present fact. (It may or may not be beside the point here to add that they had no need of economics.) We know that the exigencies of their way of living, together with their heritage, made these defects inevitable, and so we do not cavil at them. But we are more likely to be sensitive to such shortcomings in a contemporary. Whether it be because he has followed his tradition too slavishly, or because he has confused the functions of poetry and painting, or merely that an aesthetic theory has been pushed to the extreme, Dr. Williams has excluded more from his verse than any other important poet of his generation—and not all that he has excluded is bad.

His search for the immediate presentation, his passion for "objectivity" (the word has become the slogan of a school), has led him to eschew not only a great many useful poetic tools—even, usually, metaphor—but also the "subjective" facts about human nature. He gives us the interiors of houses, but rarely more than the outsides of people. The Waitress, one of his best poems, and a very good poem indeed, is a case in point. We have a compelling sense of the woman's presence, and her looks, gestures, and setting are sketched with a poignant delicacy; we also feel the pity that the poet has for her roughened hands, but of true sympathy there is none: we know nothing of what she is feeling, she remains an exterior which arouses in the poet a flare of "momentary beauty." Or consider this passage from The Descent of Winter:

> What chance have the old?
> There are no duties for them
> no places where they may sit.
> Their knowledge is laughed at
> they cannot see, they cannot hear.
> * * *
> Their feet hurt, they are weak . . .

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Such facts about the old as force themselves on the young are stated very movingly. But if this poem is compared with Eliot's Gerontion, the limitations of the former are obvious. Eliot, too, makes us see the uselessness and corrosion of old age; but these serve further as a framework to throw into relief the less obvious and more essential facts of senility—for the old have also a history, a tepid inner drama of reminiscence, and an intellectual recognition of their phase; and these more "subjective" facts, together

> with a thousand small deliberations,
> Protract the profit of their chilled delirium,
> Excite the membrane, when the sense has cooled,
> With pungent sauces, multiply variety
> In a wilderness of mirrors. . . .

For all the integrity of his writing, Williams has been ruthless, as the pioneers were ruthless. Cleared ground has a neat beauty of its own, but when every one of the trees has been felled, the landscape tends to have a touch of monotony. The poet is fifty, yet there is still time for reforestation.

Meanwhile, the lover of poetry will find Dr. Williams's clearing a welcome spot of refuge. There are not many such bright places.

PHILIP BLAIR RICE

Why Some Americans Are Communists

I Went to Pit College. By Lauren Gilfillan. The Viking Press. $2.50.

THE slight tinge in this book of the adolescent inclination to regard any experience as a lark is something that only those readers with very touchy social consciences will insist upon. The miners of Avelonia, fighting for the right to work and to live, accepted Miss Gilfillan's hungry curiosity and youthful good-will as she intended them, until the young man who was going with the union organizer decided he preferred the author from New York, and another organizer spread word that anyone not for was against. In this case he was mistaken, but by the time the suspicion spread Miss Gilfillan was beginning to realize that her efforts to be one with the miners were not succeeding. She left, taking with her a very good story.

In Avelonia, Pennsylvania, when a boy is fifteen he enters the mines. He calls it going to Pit College. A few years ago he might, if he chose, have left and gone to Detroit to look for different work or moved on to another mine, but payment in scrip has closed those ways to change and his life has become one of work when the mine is open, scabbing or strikes and living off relief when trouble comes. Miss Gilfillan, weary of fruitless job-hunting in the months following her graduation from Smith, arrived at the "patch" during a strike by the Communist National Miners' Union. She joined the picket line, helped the Young Communists' League to solicit funds on the streets of Pittsburgh, watched the slow farce of justice as performed by law and prejudice in county courts, lived in the strikers' homes, helped to bum food with hungry strikers from mortgage-laden farmers, learned to know the reasons for the savage onslaught of women and children when the scant and ridiculous relief arrived.

In place of the dubious authority of statistics and concluding generalizations, Miss Gilfillan offers a social study depending for its worth upon her ability to recapture and read aright the sound and meaning of the miner's speech, his laughter, fears, and hopes, his silences and oaths, his humanity. In unlabeled but unmistakable contrast she describes his lot as a worker—the dust-gray limbo of the "patch," the unvaried round of fatback, bread, and coffee, the women's perennial child-bearing, the destitution, the company's strangle-hold, the degrading reality of an existence in which bare necessities are never attained, and the slow, determined will of the miner to make a basic change.

"I don't approve," Miss Gilfillan tells one organizer, "of the Communists I've seen. Your browbeating, violent, impolitic methods of spreading your creed are antagonistic to any civilized being." But her point of view never biases her descriptions. Her reporting is sound, not set down by a trained investigator, but by a young woman fresh from the classroom, with an open mind, who has a natural gift for transforming her alert observations into animated narrative. She writes with sympathy and humor, and by all evidence accurately, and whatever else her purpose, she has prepared a document of the plight of one group of workers in this country which again attests that many things besides the leaves of the old capitalistic oak have withered.

FLORENCE CODMAN

Soldiers and Pensions

Soldiers What Next! By Katherine Mayo. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.

IN Italy half of the injured World War veterans refused pensions to which they were entitled because they were too proud to accept money from the government. American veterans, unhampered by pride, demand pensions to which they are not entitled. In England the British Legion "refrains from approaching any Member of Parliament to advocate legislation in its behalf." The American Legion not only approaches but bludgeons Congressmen.

This contrast between the honorable behavior of ex-soldiers abroad and the unblushing greed of ex-soldiers in the United States emerges from the 568 pages of Miss Mayo's book as her chief contribution to the accumulating lore of veterans' affairs. In approaching her latest subject the author of "Mother India" lays down a barrage of sobs about how the Pure-Hearted Doughboy came home from the war Spiritually Transfigured, bathed in a Divine Glow, and Aching to Give, but, alas, he was Misunderstood. After a chapter or so, however, Miss Mayo becomes less emotional and retells in exhaustive detail the unlovely story of how the American Legion has formed itself into a political machine to loot the Treasury. Then in the second half of her book Miss Mayo presents the first comprehensive survey of Europe's admirable non-political treatment of its veterans.

What Europe did was to fix upon a sound pension principle and stick to it. Miss Mayo drives this point home effectively. None but actual war sufferers—dependent families of men killed in action and living veterans disabled at the front—were entitled to receive money from the government. The United States started out on the same principle, but threw it overboard at the behest of the American Legion. Thousands of our "veterans" who never were within sound of gun fire got themselves on the pension roll, which of course became fabulously inflated. A pension list normally should dwindle as the ex-soldiers get well or die. This has been the case in England, France, and Italy; but while the number of names on pension rolls in those countries has steadily decreased, the number on ours has increased, Miss Mayo points out, 866 per cent. Our expenditures for veterans, instead of falling off as have those abroad, have jumped 233 per cent. Our budget is destined by present laws to grow to a maximum in 1958, about the time that England expects its payments to veterans to cease altogether.

Why are we plundered by our soldiers when European nations are not? Miss Mayo, apparently somewhat at a loss for an answer, lays the blame on our lack of godliness. Trans-

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lated into less mystical terms, what we lack is an intelligent public opinion. Comfortably remote from the war, America grew very sentimental over its soldier-boy heroes and applauded the flag-wrapped politicians who promised to hand out money to them in the name of patriotism. The European countries lived with the war and their entire populations suffered; so they have seen more realistically the dishonesty and injustice of making the able-bodied ex-soldiers a privileged class by giving them a dole. We lack, moreover, a responsible system of initiating national expenditures. Any Congressman in a generous mood can introduce a pension bill and swap yea's with any other Representative who has a pet pork-barrel scheme. Under this free-for-all system hardly anyone but an angel could resist the temptation to buy votes with public funds.

Both an aroused public opinion and a temporary curtailment of Congressional spending powers were required before President Roosevelt could prune the veterans' budget. He restored the country to the sound pension principle of payments to disabled only, and thereby saved hundreds of millions of dollars a year. But will his reform last under the bombardment of the American Legion? Miss Mayo reports the pessimistic view of an unnamed Senator. "'The President and those of us who stand by him in this effort will get little support from the country—not nearly enough to uphold our hands. . . .Compromise and concessions will result. . . .'"

Accurate prophecy, indeed. Compromise and concessions already have resulted, since Miss Mayo's book went to press. The Legion, rallying its only momentarily disheartened ranks, has come forward with a supposedly innocuous "four-point program." Three of the four points are designed to break down the principle of war-connected pension entitlement. In an effort to head off the program, President Roosevelt has recently liberalized veterans' benefits to the tune of $21,000,000 a year, and part of his liberalization opens the gates of the Treasury just a crack to ex-soldiers whose ailments were not incurred in service. This is definitely not encouraging. Neither is it encouraging that the Legion is opening fire on the able and upright Brigadier General Frank T. Hines, Administrator of Veterans' Affairs, in the hope of getting him replaced by someone more subservient.

Books such as Miss Mayo's are of great value in educating America to a proper perspective on the pension problem, and in bolstering the morale of the considerable number of ex-soldiers who dissent from the Legion's policy of plunder. One might wish that Miss Mayo had ventured more boldly into forecasting for us the future lines of Legion aggression against which we should be on guard. For the Legion is still powerful, and shrewd. To wage war on Roosevelt openly is not good strategy at present, but a covert campaign, meanwhile, can do considerable damage. Should the Legion make a not unnatural alliance with reactionary forces hostile to Roosevelt, it might well become a formidable threat to social experimentation in this country.

MARCUS DUFFIELD

Shorter Notices

On the Shore. By Albert Halper. The Viking Press. $2.

Once upon a time, the author of "Union Square" confesses, he thought sincerity and simplicity were all that mattered, but by the time he wrote Young Writer in Chicago, one of the sketches in this book, he had evidently decided it was more necessary to be hard-boiled, with the result that he also became a trifle romantic. The book bears the marks of a pot-boiler, of odd sketches gathered up and put in a biographical sequence to form the outline of a portrait of the author as a youth on Lake Street and Kedize Avenue. It is a hodge-podge of char-

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Farewell Victoria. By T. H. White. Harrison Smith and Robert Haas. $2.

"Farewell Victoria" is one long, nostalgic adieu to a dead period. Its ancestry, or at any rate its consanguinity, is obvious. Even its publishers hint on the jacket that it may be a trifle reminiscent of "Cavalcade." It could and should be ignored as a weak echo of Mr. Coward's splendid emotional orgy if it were not for the fact that the author, T. H. White, writes an original and exciting prose. His style is neat, precise, and, above all, controlled. He sees and remembers with a clarity that might be called poetic. Unfortunately, his narrative lacks the accuracy and sureness of touch which characterize his handling of words. He frankly flounders. His story has to do with Mundy, a groom of Victoria's reign, who grows up to be a coachman and dies a hack-driver. Mr. White finds in the simple groom all the "dignity, peace, and greatness" of the Victorian era, and the novel is really an attempt to present the whole of that Golden Age in terms of Mundy. The theory is interesting enough; it is almost the exact reverse of the theory Virginia Woolf used in writing "Jacob's Room." There you had the author searching through a period for her character. Here you find the author searching through and around a character for his period. But Mr. White is not content with one theory of story-telling. He must use four or five at haphazard, and none of them well. At various times one thinks the book is going to be a satire, a sociological study, a love story, and an impressionistic meditation by the author. It ends, naturally, by being none of them. One carries away from it no definite impression of a period or a character, only a sense of disappointment in Mr. White for not having governed himself as sternly in the planning of the book as in the writing.

Art

Frontiers of Machine Art

THE machine-art show at the Museum of Modern Art puts ball-bearings on black velvet, laboratory glass in rhythmic procession against a calculated light, and springs, propellers, plumbing, and stoves against fine woods and fabrics. In spite of its preciousness, it contains excitement equivalent to a Woolworth store, a hardware window-display, a smoothly running machine shop, a chemistry, electricity, motor-boat, automobile, or airplane show. Objects which have often fascinated and pleased us all are here officially recognized as things of beauty produced by America in the twentieth century.

Isolated as such, they clarify what the machine can do for beauty that the human hand cannot do. Artists have always struggled for rhythmical regularity in order to get symmetry and smooth surfaces, and though their products may sometimes appeal to us because "handicraft implies irregularity, picturesqueness, decorative value, and uniqueness," as Philip Johnson says in the preface to the catalogue of the machine-art show, these are not the standards by which handicraftsmen in a handicrafts culture measure the excellence of their work. A craftsman's skill consists in his ability to attain regularity, precision, clarity, and he does so by practiced, rhythmic manual coordination and movement; but the machine far outdoes the steadiest,

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most regularly coordinated skilled weaver or potter in achieving the regularity of pressure and movement that the weaver or potter can acquire only relatively. As a craft instrument the machine is therefore a perfected, powerfully and skilfully endowed projection of the human hand. It can cut, press, polish, mold, more perfectly than the most perfect sculptor, and so makes the artisan, technically, a creature of the past.

The modern artist is faced by the need to understand and use machines. New instruments have always in the past produced a new aesthetic. Today the powers of the human hand are heightened and multiplied mechanically, and the camera does the same thing for the human eye. It reveals proportion, motion, texture, and balance, and together with the X-ray and fluoroscope, tells the twentieth-century artist things about the living being that Leonardo struggled to find out from its corpse. Modern chemistry also multiplies materials and colors and multiplies their variability; this fact alone would impose aesthetic revolution on the painter and decorator.

But heretofore artists have been unwilling to recognize the machine as a new frontier in art. When it first began to make inroads on crafts William Morris led a bitter fight against it, on the theory that machines could make only shoddy things, because that was what machines were being used to make. To Morris and his fellow-fighters the machine was a competitor. Nowadays it has come to be looked upon as an oppressor. Plainly it is just an instrument, one that can be as well used for human welfare and comfort as for human discomfort and oppression. To put this idea into practice involves social revolution, just as to put the idea of the machine as an art instrument into action implies aesthetic revolution.

The Museum of Modern Art does not present the machine as an artistic instrument, but as itself a work of art. A screw and a spring and a propeller are surely beautiful, but they are not art unless everything that is beautiful is also to be called art—a tree, a girl, a horse. Ordinarily one assumes that objects made primarily to express emotion are to be called art, though one does not need to say that all products of the artistic impulse are beautiful. None of the objects in the Modern Museum show were made primarily to express emotion. Machines, so far, have been used chiefly to make more machines; secondly, to make scientific instruments; thirdly, to make useful objects. A few by-products of these activities have been used for decorative purposes. In other words, machines have been used by industrialists for industrial purposes, by scientists for scientific purposes, and by business men for business purposes; not yet by artists to make art.

So far the only artists who have made much of a place for themselves at the machine are artists who serve business, collaborating in the design of useful objects in order to make them more attractive to buyers. Occasionally they take some industrial forms into purely decorative media, and then an elegant shop labels the object art and raises the price. In the Modern Museum there are bowls and vases in one room exactly like the laboratory glassware in an adjoining room, with the difference that as "art" they are labeled Fostoria and Steuben and cost five or six times as much as when they are called Eimer and Amend battery and hydrometer jars.

There is no reason, except perhaps business, why artists should not be served by the machine instead of only serving it. At present, however, it still comes hard to the manual craftsman, such as every painter and sculptor still is, to make his peace with the higher mechanics. In order to do so he must learn his trade all over again, and people tend to defend what they know against what they don't know. Besides, the artist is sentimentally attached to the palette and chisel and quiet studio and easel and Greek fragment. Spray-guns, electric drills, and laboratories imply a terrifying new world, and it takes brave men to master it.

ANITA BRENNER

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Drama

Moral Holiday

SOME years ago Harry Wagstaff Gribble wrote an insane sort of comedy called "March Hares." No dramatic critic seems able to forgive him for the fact that he has never been so funny since, and that is one of the extraneous reasons why "The Perfumed Lady" (Ambassador Theater) got somewhat less than justice done it. Another one is that conventional, fluffy farces seldom provide the commentator with anything much to say, and that the commentator, being human, shows his resentment by reporting that he was not amused. As for me, I propose to rise superior to such unworthy tendencies. I enjoyed myself—not deliriously and not profoundly, but well enough—and most of the persons about me seemed to do the same.

There is, to be sure, nothing original about the plot of the piece and no distinctive flavor to the wit, which follows a familiar style of smart badinage. Nevertheless, the situations always have been funny and the dialogue is bright. Given a gay young man engaged to the sister of a very serious young man, add two typists and a suave young pianist, and one knows what to expect. Granted that one gets, as in this case one does, something just slightly different, the result may serve very well as a distraction—especially for those who, like myself, don't mind "escaping" now and then into that world where people spend their time slipping in and out of bedrooms without serious consequences to anyone. If it really existed, this would probably be the best of all possible worlds. Since it doesn't, it behooves us to invent it.

Mr. Gribble's naughty young man does not have much to distinguish him from the other Don Juans of farce. His good young man is also pretty conventional except for the final phase in which he discovers that he has made the habitual mistake of believing that he behaved as he wanted to behave when he was only behaving as he thought other people ought to. On the other hand, his virginal typist, perpetually and often unnecessarily on guard over her virtue, is almost a character. They commonly say that a girl can't be too careful, but this one proves that she can—by shooting a young man on the erroneous theory that since he had an opportunity to "take advantage of her" in a state of unconsciousness, he might safely be assumed to have done so. This illustrates something which I have myself observed—namely, that the virtuous often attribute to the wicked not only a complete lack of scruple but also an unfailing persistence of indiscriminate appetite which the wicked would be glad if they could actually possess.

Ben Lackland as the good young man, Helen Brooks as his sister, and Brian Donlevy as the Don Juan do nicely. So do various others, including Ollie Burgoyne as a colored maid, Marjorie Peterson as the apprehensive virgin, and June Martel as a talkative office girl more ready to make herself generally useful to her employers. I liked the bit where the virgin, suddenly overwhelmed by the romantic eloquence of the good young man making an honorable proposal, exclaims in dismay: "Why Mr. Pellett, you talk so nice a girl might not know what she was saying yes to."

"New Faces" (Fulton Theater) is an unpretentious "intimate" review of a kind that suggests the old "Grand Street Follies" and "Garrick Gaieties," even though it is not quite so good as romantic memory represents either of those two to have been. As is usual at such affairs, one is compelled to sit through a good deal of uninspired singing and dancing, but one gets a reward in the form of several satiric sketches that are both genuinely funny and engagingly fresh—the best being, perhaps, "Katharine Hepburn Gets in the Mood for 'Little Women'" and "An Afternoon with the English Juvenile Players." In the first, spinning wheels, bits of Plymouth Rock, and a few dying old ladies are brought in one after another in the effort to give Miss Hepburn the proper feel of New England sadness; in the second some bouncing young people of the sort that is frightfully keen about games discuss something or other with such admirable accents that it is all perfectly unintelligible to us Yanks. Of the "new faces" the one which seemed to please the audience most belongs to a certain Billie Haywood and is black.

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